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THE
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY
OF
FREE NATIONS.

VOL. II.—THE DUTCH.

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

THE NATION

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THE
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY
OF
FREE NATIONS,

CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO
THEIR DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS AND
EXTERNAL POLICY.

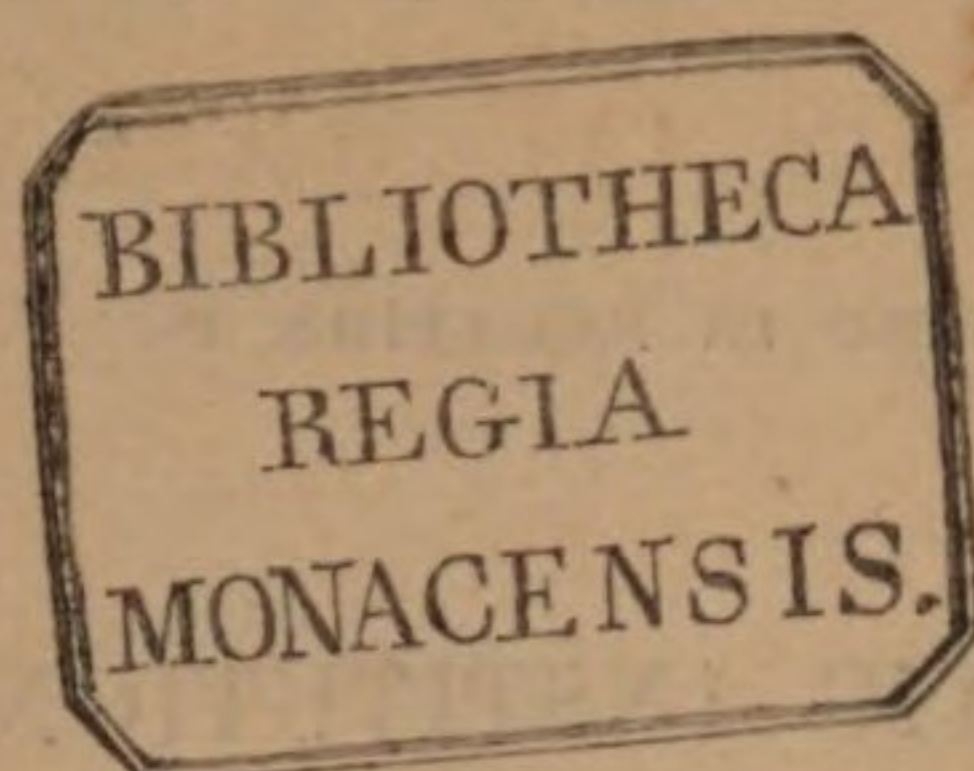
BY
W. TORRENS M^cCULLAGH.

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THE
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF FREE NATIONS.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEVEN SEA LANDS.

“Of all the German tribes the Batavians are the bravest. They dwell in the isles rather than on the banks of the Rhine, desiring to avoid incorporation with the empire. And their reward is with them, for they boast the proud distinction that they have never yielded tribute, or recognised a foreign tax-gatherer. Rome asks them not for contributions; but in the hour of danger looks for their aid, as the javelin is sought for on the eve of the battle.”¹

AMONG the numerous etchings of inartificial life with which, as though for contrast's sake, Tacitus has illustrated his solemn tale of imperial civilisation in decay, few are more vivid or suggestive than that wherein he has delineated the early dwellers at the mouths of the Rhine.

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DUTCH.

¹ Tacitus, De Mor. Germ. cap. 40.

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VIII.
Auxiliaries
of the
Romans.

A.D. 358.

Fearless, full of energy, and faithful to their word, the Romans deemed their voluntary services more valuable than their reluctant allegiance; and these the Batavians were willing to render as “auxiliaries and friends”² on no very unreasonable terms. The habits of their amphibious life enabled them with equal facility to furnish light cohorts to the proconsular armies and venturous crews to the fleet that was maintained to guard the northern coasts of the empire. Alike to them whether they were employed to bring supplies of corn from Britain to the imperial towns,³ or to keep watch at the gates of the pavilion wherein Cæsar slept.⁴ Trusted when the mildew of suspicion rested on all others, they were ready to follow the imperial eagle across the Dalmatian plains, or through the mists and surging waters of the German Sea. As the heterogeneous hosts of the empire moved warily from post to post, their light-hearted and lighter-laden allies led the way,⁵ insusceptible of the pains of discomfort or fatigue,—ever ready to ford the torrent, or to scour the suspected hill. Excitement and good cheer during their time of service, and liberal pay and booty at its close, amply rewarded the hardy children of the fens. On such terms they stood with Rome for many

² “Gens Batavorum amici et fratres Rom. Imper.” &c.—See inscription in Basnage, *Annales des Provinces Unies*, Tom. I. p. 17.

³ Such was their occupation in

the reign of Julian.—Ammianus Marcellinus, Lib. XVII.

⁴ Suetonius, in *Vit. Calig.* § 43.

⁵ Cæsar, *Comment. Lib. VI.* cap. 20, et seq.

generations;⁶ and they could with truth aver that their country was still free.⁷

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VIII.

Free, — but what beside? If analytical conjecture may be relied on, the entire region that in after-times was destined to become the *terra firmissima* of arts and industry, was then but one vast half-submerged and sterile swamp. The Romans had seen the inhabitants use clods of dried clay for fuel; at the present day the piles of Amsterdam rest on peat; and the evidences of its once universal prevalence, as well as the causes of its formation at the diffusive exits of the Maas and Rhine, are sufficiently obvious. Niebuhr characteristically notes, when trying to peer through the mist of Frisian antiquities, that in the ancient dialect there is no word signifying marsh or bog, as if, no other kind of soil being known, there was no need of any such distinctive term. Some tracts — those, in all probability, which the ocean most frequently overflowed — were called brackish or salt; others, more inland, were denominated fresh lands; but all were alike marsh, so there had been no meaning in the phrase that is elsewhere used as an expletive.⁸

The marsh
lands.

Manifestly, too, the formation of the country must have been the slow and silent work of ages, — the *débris* of Nature's annual ruin swept by winter floods towards the sea, partly clinging to

Formation
of the coun-
try.

⁶ "Germanorum cohortem a Cæsaribus olim ad custodiam corporis institutam multisque experimentis fidelissimam, dissolvit S. Galba, ac sine ullo incommodo in

patriam remisit." — Suetonius, in Vit. Galbæ, 17.

⁷ Tacitus, De Germ. 41.

⁸ Niebuhr's Posthumous Works, edited by his son.

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VIII.

the last edge of land, and, whenever allowed resting time, rapidly cohering with it. But how often the immature process had been baffled by the insurgent waves, and the new soil, torn from its holding-ground, was sucked down into the fathomless tide, — who shall venture to surmise. It is said that, within a comparatively recent period, one might have walked from Eyderstadt, now on the mainland, to Heligoland, an isle some distance from the shore ; and it can hardly be doubted that the confines of the Batavian territory have undergone as frequent fluctuations from physical as from political causes.⁹

Belgium.

Of the Belgic provinces it is not intended here to attempt any delineation, nor will the course of their industrial developement be noticed, save incidentally. Although similar, in many respects, to their maritime neighbours, and during more than one brief season drawn into the bonds of political alliance vowed to be indissoluble, and however potent the confused associations that in most of our minds connect the two nations under the illusion of one common name, — it is certain that in almost every thing of abiding interest in their political and social characteristics, no identity can be truly said to have ever existed between them. Where the currents of their good or evil fortune intermingle, it will be instructive to note the temporary fusion and its consequences. But any attempt to affiliate general

⁹ Niebuhr, *ut supra* ; *Recherches sur le Commerce*, Tom. I. p. 71.

results in Holland to Belgian institutions or events, or to shew any continuous chain of reciprocal cause and effect between the two countries, would tend only to perplexity and error. As nearest neighbours, and relatives next of kin, as subjects at particular periods of the same absent sovereigns, and governed by a somewhat similar military and municipal system,¹⁰ their annals present many points of resemblance, if not of parallel. But it is, therefore, the more necessary to bear in mind, that when the days of their common tutelage passed by, and the opportunities for independent action and self-direction were afforded, their tendencies diverged and the difference between the two races grew plain.

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VIII.

Limiting our view, therefore, to the territory lying between $51^{\circ} 25'$ and $53^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude, we find little difficulty in recognising, from the earliest period, characteristics of a great and peculiar people,—great in the moral qualities they possessed and in the results which these qualities, cultivated and matured in the course of ages, were destined to realise. Into the aboriginal stock more than one important branch was grafted. Of these the first after the Roman period were the Frisians, who, driven westward from the interior of northern Germany, by the universal inundation of new tribes,¹¹ forcibly insisted upon sharing the fens with the Batavians. What relative proportion

The Fri-
sians.

¹⁰ Grotius, De Reb. Belg. Lib. I. cap. 3.

¹¹ Mascon, History of the Germans, Book I. chap. 3.

CHAP.
VIII.

the commingling races bore to each other we know not. The conjecture, that the new comers were superior in some sort to the indigenous population, is supported by the disuse of the ancient name, and the substitution, for many centuries, of that of Frisians.¹² The change may, perhaps, be accounted for, however, by the connexion which subsisted between the Franks and the Frisians: the common period of their migrations westward of the Rhine having led to their close alliance in their new settlements, and to the recognition, by the latter, of the suzerainty of Clovis and Clothaire, and the supremacy of their dynasty.

The seven
sea-lands.

And thus, though each province might truly boast, that it had ever been a separate, if not always self-governed, sea-land,¹³—for each had its own count or duke,—yet all of them were regarded as parts of the Austrasian kingdom. The imperial authority seldom appears to have interposed, indeed, with much effect between the belligerent chiefs who, by the irrefragable title of might, lorded it over the seven counties or states. For several centuries, indeed, their continuous severalty is not very discernible. Guelderland, Utrecht, and Holland, maintained throughout their own independency; but the rest were more or less permanently united, at various periods, with one or other of these.

Zealand.
A.D. 758.

The province of Zealand is believed to have been the earliest district permanently occupied and

¹² Recherches sur le Commerce,
Tom. I. p. 73, note 13.

¹³ Niebuhr, Letters, &c.

to a certain degree reclaimed. At the present day it is chiefly composed of a number of islands, separated from each other by narrow friths, indicative of the origin of their present conformation, of which the older chroniclers, moreover, tell. So late as the middle of the tenth century, this province was a firm, unintersected stretch of land, for not until then did the fury of the waters form those isles that now compose so large a portion of it; nor were these formed all at once in the shape they now appear; but as the inhabitants were by degrees able to fence out the sea, they have regained large portions of their ancient heritage.¹⁴

CHAP.
VIII.

A.D. 938.

In the other provinces like struggles with the inclemency of nature, although less graphically self-recorded, of necessity took place.

Other nations have had to struggle for a season or a generation with the difficulties of a new country, or with human antagonists for its possession. The Dutch had, in effect, to create a country for themselves physically as well as morally; and, when created by infinite toil and patience, they had to defend, not its exclusive occupancy alone, but its very existence, from a power in comparison with whose caprice and violence the hosts of an invader are as nought. With these, at worst, some terms might be made, and it were always possible to parley; but to what embassy would the deep give ear? or who should bind the treacherous waters?

Physical
hindrances.

¹⁴ Guicciardini, Description des Pays Bas, I. 7.

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That undismayed and undisheartened the early Frisian race should have lived on amid their often-broken, but as often-mended dykes, learning by each new catastrophe how to improve on former expedients, with no rash confidence that even these repairs would prove effectual, is the first and, on the whole, perhaps the greatest fact in the book of their national life. From it all the rest of their dauntless venture, daring, and endurance, seems to grow naturally and credibly. What work could they be put to do harder than this? Day and night, all the year round, from sire to son, to keep wakeful watch lest their country should sink into the sea!

Utrecht.

At the last ford of the Rhine a hamlet had in Roman times been built, possibly a fort also. Nothing is preserved regarding it but the name, which, in the mutations of language, passed from Ultratrajectum into Utrecht. Towards the conclusion of the seventh century,¹⁵ Clement Willebrod, an English priest, who had been educated at the monastery of Ripon, coming as a missionary into those parts, succeeded, with the aid of eleven of his fellow-countrymen, in winning over the Frisian people to the Christian faith. He fixed his abode at Utrecht, of which he was afterwards appointed bishop; and gifts of lands, at the time of little worth, were made to his successors by Pepin and Charlemagne. Such was the commencement of the temporal grandeur of the prince-bishops, whose dynasty

¹⁵ L'Art de Vérifier les Dates, Tom. V. p. 345.

attained to a power little less than sovereign during the middle ages. CHAP.
VIII.

So early as the reign of Dagobert II. we hear of a custom-house being established at Utrecht.¹⁶ A toll-house.

As king of Austrasia—the title of one of those general divisions into which the Western Empire had been broken up—nearly all the maritime Netherlands owed him fealty ; and the early developement of a disposition and faculty for commerce may be traced in the care thus so soon evinced to exact a revenue from its first essays. The imports on which duties were thus levied were chiefly destined, no doubt, for consumption in the neighbouring kingdoms, whose luxuries, if not very profitable, it was at least pleasant to think that a command of the seaports and mouths of the rivers conferred the power of taxing at will. But Utrecht had no mind to be a mere toll-house of the Merovingian kings ; it would turn its position to better account, and in due time become a great *entrepôt* and noble city.¹⁷

With ready access to the sea, and not without an early disposition towards these pursuits which their kinsmen of the Rhineland towns were beginning to follow, the inhabitants of Utrecht soon became good sailors and good weavers, and their city thrived apace. Enriched by successive grants of privileges and lands, the bishops of Utrecht gradually became powerful feudal lords. The customs at first imposed by royalty for its own use were relinquished Strength of localism.

¹⁶ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 26, note 16.

¹⁷ Ibid.

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By charter,
dated May
12, 753.

by King Pepin to the local rulers;¹⁸ and the right to levy troops and coin money was subsequently conceded, and exercised uninterruptedly from the eighth century.¹⁹ And what was the good of such local power? This, for example: After some time the Northmen came. With rapine and violence they overran the open country and menaced Utrecht. Had the freebooters once established themselves in the suburbs of the town, it was supposed that its citadel could but doubtfully be defended; of their own accord, therefore, the people set fire to their habitations sooner than allow the invaders to gain possession of them.²⁰ Invasion where an industrious community feel that they have a stake in their country, and where no such element exists, are very different things.

Holland.

The province, however, which even before the introduction of Christianity was regarded as chief among the brethren, and which eventually gave its own distinctive title of Haupt-land (head-land) to the entire region,²¹ was that narrow district lying between Utrecht and the sea. Peculiarly exposed to the rigours of the climate and to the dangers of both the inland waters and the ocean,—with a soil apparently capable of growing little else than bent or fern, and by its situation equally bereft of a choice of friends and of the security of isolation,—

¹⁸ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 32, note 24.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 30, notes 21 and 22; Tom. I. p. 75.

²⁰ Davies, History of Holland, Vol. I. p. 26.

²¹ Niebuhr, Letters, &c.

Holland's infancy was rocked by every storm, and its gradual developement, in the words of her best and noblest statesman, was one long "wrestle for existence."²² But as her schooling was severe and her arrival at maturity slow, so was her success at last transcendant and illustrious,—so does that wondrous region still silently give the lie to the pestilent fallacy which indolence hugs to its rags,—that without physical advantages and national seclusion no country can become prosperous or powerful. The Dutch had neither, and, nevertheless, achieved the highest triumphs by land and sea—in peace and war—in arts and laws—in foreign trade and domestic industry—in the diffusion of civilisation, wealth, and knowledge, in every quarter of the world. And of the people who accomplished these things, the inhabitants of Haupt-land were generally the most deserving and distinguished.

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The Zealanders and Hollanders were peculiarly devoted to a sea-faring life, and its habits enabled them to contribute, in an especial manner, to the growth of their country in enterprise, power, and independence. Compared with England, Spain, or other countries, they had not a single first-rate harbour along their entire coast. With the exception of Rotterdam, Flushing, and Helvoetsluys, there was

Harbours.

²² John De Witt, Political Maxims of the State of Holland, comprehending a general view of the civil government of that republic, and the principles on which it is founded; the nature,

rise, and progress of the commerce of its subjects, and of their true interests with respect to all their neighbours. Translated from the Dutch. London, 1743. Part I. ch. 3.

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not one which was not positively bad. Even at the present day, all of these are subject to very serious disadvantages; and as for the port of Amsterdam, its approaches are naturally so shallow, that at all times they have been passable for ships of ordinary burden only at high-water.²³ To these disadvantages must be added the total interruption of traffic caused by the closing of nearly all the harbours during three months in the year by the intense frosts;²⁴ while some, like Zierickzee, have been entirely choked up by the sands.²⁵ All this, nevertheless, appeared to the Dutch no impediment in the way of making their country the commercial centre of Europe, and it accordingly became so.

A county of
the empire,
A.D. 913.

From the days of Theodore I. Holland was a county of the empire. Successive grants and privileges, conferred by various occupants of the German throne, rendered the counts little less than sovereign in their remote and neglected domain. The emperors seldom interfered in its feudal affairs, and its other (its real) concerns were beneath their knightly care. Ere the tenth century closed, it was even questioned in what sense Holland owed fealty to the empire, if at all.²⁶

Church at
Egmont.

More curious and instructive than the chronicle of these royal enfeoffments is the cursory notice made of the church of St. Adelbert, built of stone at Egmont towards the conclusion of the tenth cen-

²³ H. Moll, Vol. III. p. 578.

²⁴ Temple, Account of the
United Provinces, ch. 1.

²⁵ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 372.

²⁶ Davies, Hist. of Holland,
Vol. I. pp. 24, 25.

tury, wherein was an altar of pure gold enriched with gems. The erection of such an edifice so long before the gorgeous ages of Catholicism is indicative of a degree of knowledge and of wealth not to be despised; for both were needed “in a country wholly destitute of materials for such a purpose, and where, from the nature of the ground, considerable skill must have been required to make a secure foundation for a building of any solidity.”²⁷ But it has so long been the fashion to speak of the period in question as the midnight of European ignorance, that it is almost as much as one’s character for orthodoxy is worth to credit any evidence, however palpable or cumulative, which honest and unpartisan research may offer in refutation of blind and indiscriminate calumny.²⁸

The desire for improvement and the capacity for invention manifested themselves very early. Soon after the introduction of Christianity a greater degree of knowledge begins to be observable. The use of glass is mentioned at a time when it is believed to have been generally unknown in England. The manufacture of horologes and the possession of, if not the art of constructing, certain astronomical instruments, were acquired from the Franks; and what, perhaps, is more illustrative of the national temper and tendency, “many amongst them

Beginning
of civilisa-
tion.

²⁷ Davies, Hist. of Holland, Vol. I. pp. 24, 25.

²⁸ One of the ablest exposures of the misstatements of certain modern writers is the recent

work “on the Dark Ages,” by the Rev. R. S. Maitland, to whose learning, taste, and eloquence I cannot refrain from tendering the tribute of my respect.

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knew how to read and write.”²⁹ An acquaintance with the science of numbers is not mentioned, but circumstances leave hardly any room to doubt that the Dutch did not remain ignorant of the facilities which were opened up for the application and extension of that branch of knowledge during the following century by the introduction of the Arabic system of notation. It is scarcely too much to say, that what the discovery of the needle proved to the advancement of navigation, this notable improvement has been to the practical use of arithmetic. Let any one endeavour to imagine the ordinary books of a modern counting-house (not to speak of banking-ledgers or financial tables), translated from their clear and rapidly intelligible numeric dialect into pages of Roman figures, endless to read and impossible to compare, digest, compress, or, without infinite expenditure of time and labour, at length to understand,—and he will feel what a debt of obligation the industry of Europe owes to the persevering zeal for the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge of Gerbert.

Gerbert.

This singular man was a native of Auvergne in France. The early years of his life were passed in study in the monastery of Aurillac, of whose confraternity he became a member.³⁰ Unsatisfied in the pursuit of science, and hearing from afar the sounds of a higher degree of culture than Christen-

²⁹ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. I. p. 83.

³⁰ Biographie Universelle, Tom.

XLIV. p. 323. Art. Sylvestre, II. par M. Desportes Becheron.

dom at the time afforded, he resolved to undertake a journey into the south of Spain, then possessed by the enlightened Saracens. His purpose may have been deemed by the pious ignorance of some unjustifiable. Would he go in search of human knowledge to the infidel? What could they teach him, or what could he lawfully desire to learn from such unhallowed sources? Gerbert thought there was much, or might be: and while the over-zealous would probably have admonished him,³¹ he felt that he was more truly serving God by using every means to improve the intelligence that had been given him, than by remaining securely content with the knowledge contained within his cloister: — so he went his way. Some years he spent with the accomplished and industrious Mahommedans of Seville, accepting gratefully from them those treasures of medical, astronomical, and mechanical science which their fathers had brought with them from the East, and which they appear to have been at all times solicitous to extend and ready to impart. The Saracens taught their illustrious pupil that ingenious method of counting, which, if, as some allege,³² it had formerly been known to the Romans, had been so entirely lost, even amongst the learned, that it took nearly three centuries to become popularly intelligible to the nations of northern and central Europe.

On his return to France, Gerbert's blameless A magician.

³¹ Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, Vol. I. p. 272.

³² *Biog. Univ.* Tom. XLIV. p. 324.

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Horologes.

life and unostentatious piety reconciled the distrustful to listen and see what he had learned *in partibus infidelium*: and, listening, their wonder and admiration grew. The vulgar called him a magician;³³ but no cheat of necromancy or conjurer's art was here. Gerbert had no secrets to sell,—no secrets of any sort. Whoever would listen might learn all that he himself knew; what was done and how. A good man this, and true, — good to his kind, true to his God, — neither persuadeable by weak men against seeking knowledge wheresoever it could be had, nor by wise men into abandoning the faith wherein he had been brought up.³⁴ The first clock ever seen in France was constructed by Gerbert; “many were stimulated by his exhortations and example to the pursuit of various branches of science; and it is certain that from this time onward such as were eager for knowledge, especially medicine, arithmetic, and philosophy, had a strong desire to hear and read the Arabians who lived in Spain and Italy.”³⁵ King Robert of France and the Emperor Otho are both said to have received instructions at his hands. They had, at all events, the wisdom to discern that this was a man worthy of anything and every thing which it was within the scope of their influence to procure for him or bestow. Many dignities were heaped on him; but they corrupted him not. The dissemination of

³³ Biog. Univ. Tom. XLIV.
p. 324.

³⁴ See Mabillon's *Analecta*,
Tom. II. p. 215.

³⁵ Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.* Book
III. Part 2, ch. 1, § 8.

scientific information continued to occupy much of his attention; and there is reason to believe that, however unpropitious the feudal soil in general was in his day, and long afterwards, for the reception or growth of knowledge, the labours of this excellent man were in many instances far from vain. Through the influence of his royal pupils Gerbert was finally raised to the Papal throne, which he filled with all the lustre of his genius and virtue for some years under the title of Silvester II. CHAP.
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At a very remote period the Frisians are believed to have been in possession of several manufactures, which were held in high repute among the people of other countries where comparatively little progress in the peaceful arts has as yet been made. Among the gifts bestowed by Charlemagne upon his favourite officers were robes of various colours, the products of the Frisian loom; and when he sent costly presents to the contemporary princes in his alliance, mantles of fine cloth, either white, or of a purple dye, were not forgotten.³⁶ To supply the material for these fabrics, raw wool became an article of import from Britain; and it is worthy of note, that Charlemagne, when at war with the Anglo-Saxon kings, scrupulously protected their merchants resident in, or who might have occasion to pass through, his dominions, and forbade any

Early manufactures,
750 to 800.

³⁶ Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 40.

CHAP. VIII. interruption of the commerce between the two nations.³⁷

Wool trade.
From 871 to
1066.

From the days of Alfred to those of Edward the Confessor raw wool from England was to a considerable extent exchanged for Dutch and Flemish cloths. It is probable that in the coarser descriptions the Anglo-Saxons³⁸ partly supplied their own wants ; but of fabrics fit for exportation there appears no trace. In the art of dyeing they were exceedingly deficient ; and, from the epithets bestowed by the chroniclers on the cloths of superior texture and colour, it would seem that persons of rank ordinarily wore such as were of Netherland manufacture, and that when a desire subsequently arose of imitating them at home, their neighbours were regarded as the only source whence a knowledge of the art could be learned. The men of

A.D. 1050. Wyk de Duurstede and Nimeguen produced particularly fine cloths, and knew how to dye them of a scarlet hue, with kermes probably brought from Spain. For it is recorded how the Count of Cleves obtained a certain feudal jurisdiction there, upon condition of his presenting yearly to the Emperor “three pieces of scarlet cloth made of English wool.”³⁹ Nor did the hand of Nimeguen forget its cunning. More than a hundred and twenty years

³⁷ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 27, note 16 ; compare, however, the statement in Yair, p. 12.

³⁸ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 345.

³⁹ Beckmann, History of Inventions, Vol. II. p. 191.

later the hereditary rights of the Count of Guelderland, as chief lord of the province, were confirmed by the Emperor Frederick I. upon stipulation of the same tribute.⁴⁰

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Soon after the Norman invasion, and while the Conqueror still lived, a band of fugitives, from the shores of the Netherlands, sought shelter in England. They had been driven to save their lives by sea, in consequence of a sudden inundation which had laid the district they had hitherto inhabited under water. Being active and industrious men, ready to fight or weave, William, "whose queen was of their country," gave them a settlement on the northern frontier, near Carlisle. His son Henry, finding that they agreed ill with the people around them, transplanted them to Pembrokeshire to colonise a district conquered from the Welch. There they abode, tilling the fields he had given them, and making woollen cloth as they had learned to do in their ancient home. From the cause assigned for their migration it is natural to conclude that they came from Zealand,—the district chiefly invaded by the sea within historic times.⁴¹

First colony
to England.
About 1070

A.D. 1170.

Meanwhile the commercial intercourse between the countries became gradually more established, the people of both finding much benefit therein. English corn, cheese, hides,⁴² and other agricultural

English ex-
ports, 1180-
1187.

⁴⁰ Beckmann, History of Inventions, Vol. II. p. 191, note.

⁴¹ Macpherson, Annals of Commerce, Vol. I. p. 316.

⁴² Madox, History of the Exchequer, p. 532; Beawes, Lex Mercatoria, p. 10.

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produce, found a remunerative price in Holland. A great improvement also in the breed of sheep began to be perceptible; and the growing demand had so tended to create a steady and augmented supply, that wool came soon to be regarded as “the best merchantable commodity in the kingdom, and that which was valued of all other things next to ready money.”⁴³ Of the English exportation of corn to the Low Countries, we find frequent mention in the annals of the Plantagenet exchequer. “Arnold, son of Mabel, for leave to export corn to Norway,”^{27 Hen. II.} paid a license, or, as it was then called, a fine, to the king.⁴⁴ Every guild of artisans paid a similar tax or fine. Strangers sometimes compounded the sums they would have had to pay for separate freedom to trade in different places by a general fine. Thus “Hugh Oisel paid four hundred marks for liberty to trade in England and the king’s other dominions, and to carry away his own merchandises bought there whithersoever he would, either in time of peace or war.”⁴⁵ Hugh archdeacon of Wells paid to the exchequer the value of a tun of wine for license to export fifteen sums of corn.⁴⁶ The amount realised in a year and a half, by granting licenses to trade, was, — 18*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* for sundry merchandises; 71*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.* for leave to import and sell woad; and 23*l.* 12*s.* for leave to export wool and

⁴³ Smith, *Memoirs of Wool*, chap. 4.

⁴⁴ Madox, chap. 13, § 8, p. 323.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Amongst other items

is mentioned a *License to export cheese*.

⁴⁶ Ibid. § 4, p. 325, probably in King John’s reign.

leather. Then there were 225 marks, the produce of forty-five sacks of wool seized at Hull; and 13*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.* of corn seized at Rye; with many other items, the produce either of prizes taken at sea or seizures of contraband goods.⁴⁷ Part of Cœur de Lion's ransom was provided by a contribution of wool from the abbeys, which then had wide domains; and in the early records of the revenue there are entries of divers sums, considerable for the period, being the fines levied on merchants for attempting to smuggle wool and corn out of the kingdom without paying the lawful toll:⁴⁸ so that the export trade appears to have formed a source of regular income to the Norman kings.⁴⁹ Certain broad cloths, too, were made, though in small number, at this time in England; ⁵⁰ but the greater portion of every description of woollen fabrics, and all those of the finer textures and dyes, continued to be imported from the Netherlands,⁵¹ until the middle of the fourteenth century.

The foundation of Dort, a city which was destined to bear an important part in the subsequent history of the nation, is attributed to the feudal enmities of this period. Theodore II., count of Holland, sought, by the erection of a castle and the encouragement of a town in a position so well se-

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A.D. 1198.

Building of
Dort in
1015.

⁴⁷ Madox, chap. 18, § 4, p. 532. For produce of the *quinzieme* in each town, &c., see chap. 18, § 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid. chap. 14, § 15, pp. 387, 395.

⁴⁹ 25 Edward I. chap. 7, &c.

⁵⁰ Coke, Institute, II. 34.

⁵¹ Smith, *Memoirs of Wool*, chap. 4.

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lected for the purpose, to check the encroachment of his spiritual brother of Utrecht. He established, moreover, a custom-house there, by which tolls were exacted upon all commodities borne on the Waal. The singular privileges, in the nature of a general opportunity of pre-emption which the citizens of Dort enjoyed, may, with probability, be referred to a later period.⁵² The men of Tiel, and other towns more in the interior, loudly complained of the new tolls at Dort, and invoked the interposition of the Emperor, alleging, that if not relieved from these exactions, their traffic with England must be abandoned, and their ability to furnish contributions to the imperial treasury thereby materially impaired. Yielding to these or other instigations, an attempt was made to coerce the Count into an abandonment of his newly founded city; but it proved wholly abortive;⁵³ and Dort (or as it was then called Dordrecht) throve apace.

Quarrels
of the
provinces.

Meanwhile the rivalry between the rulers of Holland and Utrecht continued without abatement. Other questions respecting river-tolls furnished the excuse for hostilities. Certain tracts of border territory were also disputed between them, and between the Counts of Holland and the Bishops of Utrecht a sanguinary and protracted struggle was waged for the possession of Friezland, which alternately yielded to one or other of its restless neighbours, and seldom aspired to rival their feudal

⁵² Yair, Account of the Scotch Trade in the Netherlands, p. 15.

⁵³ Davies, Vol. I. p. 28.

independency, although its local chiefs and hardy population were not deficient in bravery or worth. Two parties, however, seem to have divided the Friezlanders time immemorial, one leaning to the mitred lords of Utrecht, the other to the hereditary princes of Holland. The Emperor Henry III. was, on one occasion, persuaded by the Bishop and the Count of Flanders, who coveted Walcheren and some other parts of Zealand, to invade Holland with an imperial army. A sudden overflowing of the Meuse obliged the invaders to retire precipitately and with no trifling loss. In 1047.

The floods served the Hollanders this time, as at others, in a somewhat different way. The direct benefit conferred by such casual interposition in their favour furnished but little compensation for the misery and destruction which they often caused. Evils, however, like benefits, are sometimes antagonist, and in a certain measure incompatible. Is not the saying ever true, "that out of evil cometh good," for them that trustful and undismayed even in adversity "possess their souls;" who, in their trials, are enabled to discern the teachings of experience, discipline, and hope; who know that "to true labour (a very rare thing in this world) no obstacle is insurmountable, but all hills of difficulty become at last Pisgahs and hills of vision?"⁵⁴ It happened more than once that the floods which swept away the peasant's store quenched

⁵⁴ Carlyle, Unpublished Letter.

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also, for a time, the flames of war. A sudden rising of the rivers or inroad of the sea would sometimes prescribe hasty terms of accommodation between the belligerents, and an imperious necessity compel the Utrechters and Hollanders to desist from actual strife, and combine in taking measures against the common danger.

Thus we find Count Florence III. making a treaty of peace in 1162 with his episcopal rival, whereby they agreed to rule over Friezland jointly, and wisely adding conditions to which the Counts of Guelderland and Cleves were also parties, for the extension and repair of certain dykes for the common benefit. Considerable works, chiefly intended to restrain the inundations of the Rhine, were in consequence begun, and a new canal was formed to lead off a portion of the river-floods to the Zuyder Sea.⁵⁵

Tolls on the
great rivers,
1157.

The establishment of custom-houses at Geervliet, Dort, and other places on the great rivers, furnished a source of no inconsiderable income to the Counts of Holland. All goods passing down the streams from Belgium and Lower Germany paid toll or transit duty; and goods coming from England or France were subjected to the same tax. If something was done, in consideration of these exactions, to render the navigation of the rivers more easy, or to afford the merchants facilities of quayage, storeage, &c. at certain places, it does not appear to have reconciled

⁵⁵ Davies, Vol. I. pp. 48, 49.

the Germans and Flemings to the imposition of the tolls, of which during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there were many complaints. Sometimes those at Geervliet and Dordrecht were evaded or forcibly resisted by the Flemish merchants; but as often they were resumed, and, generally speaking, they were enforced. The strongest presumption that they were in amount not very exorbitant, lies in the steady progress of the valuable traffic which continued to be river-borne, especially between Germany and Britain. Many kinds of agricultural produce,⁵⁶ as well as tin and lead, were exchanged by Anglo-Saxon industry—beginning to revive after the storm of the Norman conquest—for the silver of the Germans,⁵⁷ and various other commodities:⁵⁸ and all were, of necessity, borne upon the waters, of whose gates the Netherlanders held the key.

Tin had for centuries been among the most regular exports from England; but so cheap had the means of transit become, and so little notion of exclusion had as yet arisen, that Matthew Paris notes how the Germans in his time having discovered mines of their own, not only drew their supplies of tin no longer from England, but actually sold it cheaper there than the men of Cornwall were wont to do; whereby the price of English tin was made to fall.⁵⁹ And thus, whether directly by their own

German and
English
trade.

⁵⁶ Madox, ch. 14, § 15, p. 388.

⁵⁷ For account of the extensive mining operations carried on in different parts of Germany during

the Middle Ages, see Jacob, Inquiry Prec. Met. Vol. I. chap. 10.

⁵⁸ Rymer, Fœdera, Tom. I. p. 243.

⁵⁹ M. Paris, Hist. Maj. p. 507.

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industry, or indirectly turning to advantage the need of their neighbours, the Dutch sought to turn their opportunities to account, and to lay the broad foundations of their national commerce and policy.

Hindrances.

Yet many were the hindrances to civilisation in their Nether Land ; hard apparently their industrial lot and heavy the burden of their early way. The presage of future greatness had scarcely one natural advantage whereupon to rest. With a climate of extreme rigour the Dutch were given an arid soil destitute alike of mineral or vegetable wealth. Without inexhaustible faith in themselves and in the eventual victory in store for painful perseverance, nothing could have been accomplished. As the work of reclamation, culture, and improvement, however, went forward, its difficulties slowly grew less. So early as the eleventh century, several great works were begun. Often, during the subsequent age, the ramparts against the insatiable ocean, whereon infinite toil had been expended, were swept away, and all the cost and labour of them lost. But the spirit of industry was a true spirit and could not die. It brooded over the face of the ruinous waters, and on the first symptom of their subsidence began its brave work anew. At last its triumph came ; it built out the destroyer, and laid the fast foundations of a noble home where it might dwell safely.

The fisheries

Although we may believe that, from the earliest times, the hardy boatmen of the Zealand friths and

the creeks of the Zuyder Sea, found a subsistence by fishing, there is no evidence of any knowledge amongst them of the art of curing fish, or of the existence of the trade which their descendants pursued with so much profit. Some allege that, in the ninth century, the Netherlanders used to buy fish in Scotland,⁶⁰ but of what description, or in what manner preserved, it is vain to conjecture. The earliest authentic mention of the herring-fishery is that found in the chronicles of Norway about the year 975. Nothing is said of any method of preserving the fish with salt, or of a general trade with other countries.⁶¹ It is not unlikely that the Zealanders, however, soon learned the value of this pursuit, and the peculiarities of season and locality on which its success depends. Still it could have only been useful as an auxiliary means of subsistence for themselves; and, consequently, we find no mention made of it in the general notices of the international traffic of the time.

At a later period the Frith of Forth used every year to be covered with fishing-boats from the Netherlands, and elsewhere.⁶² And about the same time numbers of small craft were regularly to be seen off the Isle of Rugen, where the herring-shoals were long very abundant, and whence they returned laden with a valuable winter store. Last of all, the men of Zierickzee bethought them of seeking for the shoals nearer home, and fortunately found that off the

⁶⁰ Anderson, Vol. I. p. 253.⁶² Ibid. p. 325.⁶¹ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 274.

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coast, near Briel, the herrings at particular seasons might be had as plentifully as in the Northern Seas. Henceforth, from all the towns along the shores of Zealand, Holland, and Friezland, small boats called *shabarts*, specially adapted to the purpose, used to gather the fruits of this new field of industry ; and by closely packing the fish in barrels they contrived to preserve them fit for food for a considerable time.⁶³ This method was no doubt exceedingly imperfect. When insufficiently or unequally dried previous to their being put into barrels they necessarily decayed ; and this must have the oftener happened from the circumstance of the shoals visiting some places only in winter,⁶⁴ when the atmosphere was damp and fuel dear.⁶⁵ Thus the poor man's labour was often lost, and the food which he had laid by for his family was, too late, found to be useless. It was happy for the Dutch that in this, as in almost every other branch of their economy, they depended not on any one resource. All experience testifies the fearful jeopardy in which every nation stands whose vain confidence in the fertility of their soil, or the ordinary yield of their single crop, leads them to neglect alternative means of subsistence.

Charter of
Yarmouth.
A.D. 1208.

From the terms of a charter granted by King John to the people of Yarmouth, inviting foreign merchants of every description, and giving them more than

⁶³ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 338.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Vol. I. p. 338, note.

⁶⁵ Sir Joshua Child, *New Discourse of Trade*, Preface (Second edition, 1694).

ordinary privileges there, the discovery of herring-shoals off the eastern coast of England seems attributable to the commencement of the thirteenth century.⁶⁶ Gradually more distinct mention is made of what ultimately became the staple trade of the place; and leave for the Dutch to fish off the Yarmouth shore became a constant article in the treaties of friendship and commerce between the two countries. A fact still more important in the history of Netherland trade derives strong presumptive proof from the belief that the Zealanders and Frieze-landers⁶⁷ thus early came to fish in these waters. The method of saving herrings by the use of salt was certainly known to the English many years previous to the period assigned by the annalists of the Dutch for its successful use among them. The valuable discovery was apparently made by About 1210 one Peter Chivalier soon after the time when the charter referred to was given to Yarmouth; and a patent not only was granted to him, but subsequently, for a sum of twenty marks paid to the exchequer, to Peter de Perars, for “leave to salt fishes as Peter A.D. 1221. Chivalier used to do.”⁶⁸ How far the secret was preserved, or to what degree of perfection the mode was carried, it were vain to conjecture. In process of time a knowledge of the art naturally spread,—the northern German cities being among the first to reap the benefit of it by importations of salted fish.

⁶⁶ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 374.⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 390.⁶⁸ “Pro licentia sallendi pisces

sicut Petrus Chivalier sallire solebat.”—Madox, History of the Exchequer, chap. 13, § 4, p. 326.

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No doubt the thrifty and imitative men of the Netherlands appreciated and applied its advantages as soon as any of their neighbours ; but whether we are to infer that the earlier process was for a long time subject to failure, and entailed consequent loss, or that some other drawback long since forgotten attended it in practice, we know that by the best-informed statesmen and historians of the Dutch, the acquisition of the way of thoroughly curing herrings, ling, and cod-fish with salt, so as to fit them for exportation, is invariably ascribed to William Beackleson, a native of Zierickzee, in the latter part of the following century.⁶⁹

Buoys.

For their nets the fishermen needed a constant supply of some description of light wood. Cork did not grow in their country, or in any district near. From the Baltic they were consequently obliged to bring what they called *toll-hout*, and what by experience they found well suited to their purpose. Probably it was of this wood that they first constructed the water-marks to which they gave the name of *boei* (buoys). Then, wisely judging that what they found so useful to themselves would find a sale elsewhere, they offered it to their German neighbours ; and thus sprung up another auxiliary trade, one of the numberless means which a thoroughly industrious people are ever discovering and turning to account.⁷⁰

The earliest fisheries in the Atlantic and

⁶⁹ De Witt, Part I. chap. 6.

⁷⁰ Beckmann, History of Inventions, Vol. II. pp. 113, 114.

Northern Oceans are said to have been those of the Norwegians, chiefly in the Wike of Norway, which, while the fief of Bahus belonged to that kingdom, was called Vuge, and extended from the river of Gotha-elf to Swinsund. This is proved in the general description of Norway and the neighbouring isles written in 1599, by Peter Clauss, canon of the cathedral of Stafinger, and published at Copenhagen in 1632, by Olaus Wormius. After a very exact description of Wike, and the fief of Bahus, this author says, until 1539 there was extensive line-fishing there for haa, or hæ-salmon, and likewise for herrings, which throve till the year 1587, when it fell off, in consequence of an apparition of a monstrous herring, or the improved method of the Dutch in salting the fish.⁷¹

The arable extent of Guelderland, its central position, and the number of its ancient towns, rendered it at all times of great importance. The men of Zutphen and Arnheim were foremost among the claimants of civic freedom;⁷² and at Tiel and Bommel industry struck early root,⁷³ and struggled bravely to maturity through countless storms of feudal violence and rapine. Guelderland was constituted a county, or earldom, by Henry III., and bestowed on Otho, count of Nassau; and thus originated the influence of that celebrated family in

A.D. 1079.

⁷¹ Martin Tydclokurson, Observations on an article entitled, "The Dutch Gold Mine," published in "Le Journal Economique," —Select Essays, pp. 311–313.

⁷² Batavia Illustrata, Part I. p. 42.

⁷³ Recherches sur le Commerce, Vol. I. p. 63.

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A.D. 1339.

the affairs of the Netherlands. Three centuries later the province was created a duchy of the empire. Vigour and ability continued to distinguish the house of Nassau, and they were destined to become eventually the most popular and powerful family in the nation.

Character of
the people.

Apart from their influence, however, Guelderland hardly occupies as important a place in the general history of the country as Utrecht or Holland, each of which had greater natural difficulties to contend against, a very inferior soil, and for a long time a less numerous population. Yet both of them produced a greater number of illustrious men; both outran Guelderland in the race of enterprise, science, and art; but of neither could it be said that it possessed a more genuine spirit of independence, or a nobler aptitude for national and domestic freedom. If in some respects less imitative and ambitious than their more maritime brethren, the people of Guelderland throughout centuries of change in manners, sentiments, and institutions, preserved as steadily and usefully the self-reliant and self-respectful character of the nation, — the true guerdon of its wealth and fame.

The towns.

Population, still extremely sparse in the open country, began to increase more rapidly in the towns. Even while as yet few of them were fortified,⁷⁴ they afforded some degree of shelter against the ravages of war and of the elements; and the

⁷⁴ See Cronyk van Vlanderen, in Yair, p. 4.

beginnings of trade and manufacture were already there ; for “ the cradle of the commerce of the Dutch was likewise that of their liberty.”⁷⁵ CHAP.
VIII.

A just sense of the value of population pervaded the early Frisian governments. If in the madness of their jealousy and conflicts with each other, they wasted the lives of their subjects, they at least were not indifferent to their political loss ; for at all times we can trace “ an anxious desire for the augmentation of the inhabitants of the country, and still more of the towns.”⁷⁶ They discerned that in population and industry their strength lay ; and that the safe or abiding existence of either was impossible without the other. And this right notion led naturally to another, and in some degree a nobler one,—their undeviating and unreserved exercise of industrial hospitality. The Counts of Holland not only made frequent grants of protection to foreign traders desirous of settling in their dominions, but took special pains to induce them to do so, “ encouraging and inviting them to come and trade freely in their dominions, and promising them all manner of safety upon paying the regulated duties and customs.”⁷⁷ So the merchant of Westphalia, Brandenburg, Portugal, and various other countries,⁷⁸ gladly came and settled in that wise and thriving land. Population.

⁷⁵ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 1.

⁷⁶ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 32.

⁷⁷ Groot Charter Boek, II. 637 ; III. 523, 555, &c. ; in Yair, p. 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

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While almost all the other governments in Europe were busy barring their frontier gates, and halloaing their pauper vassals on against the improvements and inventions of their neighbours,—while every where else the mechanist and the chemist were the objects of suspicion or ruthless injury, and the merchant an unpitied and unheard victim of *protective* extortion, the ports of Zealand, Utrecht, and Holland, were open to whosoever had any new thing to shew or sell; his person and property were not only secure, but to make him feel at home, and thus, if possible, to induce him to fix his permanent abode amongst them, was a principle of the government and a practice of the people: for both believed that it was their interest to treat strangers so.

Growth of
the municipi-
pal spirit.

The inhabitants of the towns appear to have early aspired to the benefits of self-rule. In many respects municipal privilege and jurisdiction was as yet ill-defined; but instinctively aware of the value of prescription and usage in converting neglected obligations into immunities, the thrifty burghers carefully avoided raising too frequent questions of authority, and for the most part willingly ministered, according to their means, to the wants of their feudal suzerains. The demands of the latter were frequent and importunate; but the ostensible resources of the towns, in all probability, fell far short of the wealth they gradually acquired,—its display being reserved for times of greater security. This alone accounts, in some degree, for

the rare occurrence of disputes between the burghers and their territorial lords. But there was another and still more important cause at work. From the earliest enclosure of an urban community within walls, and their first improvisation of municipal rule, the desire appeared of self-assessment, not for local purposes merely, but for those contributions which all were expected to yield to the military chiefs of the nation. For the sake of securing the uninterrupted exercise of this invaluable privilege, occasional exorbitancies in the amount demanded were tacitly forgiven. The spirit of industrial wisdom was here. The self-educated, thoughtful men of the Netherland towns knew that though taxation, laid by their own free choice and allocation, or by the wrongfulness of ignorant and arbitrary "imposing, may be all one to the purse, yet it worketh diversely upon the courage,"⁷⁹ — the courage to endure privation, to persevere under disheartenment, and to wrestle with exigencies and evils however unusual or unforeseen, which is the core of industrial life. Throughout every vicissitude they clung to this vital privilege of self-assessment; and, taking into due account the civic and individual habits to which such a practice naturally gave rise, and the infinite value of being able to form correct estimates of character and property, it is hardly too much to say that to the great destinies in store for the nation this practical element was perfectly indispensable.

⁷⁹ Bacon, Essays.

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Meanwhile the power of municipal self-assessment furnished the means of accomplishing the great and physically all-important work of drainage and reclamation. The labour and cost of the dykes, at the time when the chief lines were originally made, must have been enormous. The embankments to keep out the sea in North Holland were generally about thirty-eight feet thick at the base, and they were usually about sixteen feet high.⁸⁰ Even in the seventeenth century, the estimate of their expense, when casually requiring to be rebuilt, is sufficiently startling.

Cost of the
dykes.

A great portion of the lands lying under the level of the floods of the sea and the rivers required to be defended, at great expense, against the irruption of the waters. The making of one rod's length of sea-dyke cost in some places six hundred guilders. The charge for maintaining the artificial banks of the rivers was, likewise, a weighty burden; and, worst of all, was the expense incurred in repairing the breaches that, despite every care, were continually occurring in these embankments; for it sometimes took years to drain the country thoroughly again, by the incessant working of pump-mills erected for the purpose. Some idea may be formed of the permanent charge of maintaining all these dykes and sluices, from the fact that, in the district called Rhyn-land, which is about 80,000 morgens in extent, and which is not near the coast,

⁸⁰ H. Moll, Vol. III. p. 577.

nor intersected by a peculiar number of streams, the ordinary local rates for this purpose alone amounted to two guilders per acre, besides thirty stivers for the pump-mills, and other taxes for roads, bridges, &c.⁸¹

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No better proof can be desired of the early value attached to land and its culture than the elaborate prosecution of works of this description. Not content with guarding against actual danger from the casual rising of the waters, the inhabitants of every district learned to vie with one another in the extent to which reclamation of the soil for agricultural purposes could be carried, and the perfectness of the process. Without a popular spirit of active and persevering industry these things had been impossible. Here was no Pharaoh will to design vast undertakings or power to enforce their completion; and here was no serf-population, whose unrequited toil was applicable by despotic authority to such purposes. Without the contributions of the towns such undertakings could never have been executed by the feudal rulers of the country. Their territorial revenues were small, as their lands were poor and ill-peopled. Their own jealousies and rivalries, moreover, consumed what resources they had; and, like their contemporaries elsewhere, they were engaged in interminable warfare.

Reclama-
tion.

The example set by the Flemish towns of appointing certain times for the sale and purchase of

Public fairs.

⁸¹ De Witt, True Interest of Holland, Part I. chap. 3.

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goods was followed by their German neighbours. By the end of the tenth century fairs were established in all the leading cities of northern Europe. Persons travelled in company to these annual assemblages, and afforded each other some degree of protection,—the one thing needful in those days. It is sad to be constrained to believe, that among the principal articles of merchandise at the period were fellow-beings of both sexes, and of every age, for the most part prisoners taken in war, and sold by their captors in default of ransom. “Helmold, the author of the chronicle of the Sclavi, who wrote about the end of the twelfth century, relates that he saw seven thousand Danish slaves at one time exposed to sale in the market-place at Mecklenburgh. The common price was about a mark, or eight ounces of silver; but some were rated as high as three marks. The people of Bristol were great dealers in slaves, whom they generally exported to Ireland;”⁸² and, though checked by ecclesiastical censures, the traffic did not altogether cease, until the Irish entered into a resolution to buy no more captives, and to set at liberty those which they already held.⁸³ From the twelfth century there are few notices of the revolting trade until the discovery of the New World; for villainage was essentially a different thing, limited by territorial

Slavery.

⁸² Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 279 (on authority of Thorkelin's Essay on the Slave-Trade), p. 285 note, and p. 289. See, likewise,

Henry, Hist. Engl. Vol. IV. p. 243.

⁸³ Giraldus Cambrensis, Lib. I. cap. 18.

rights and duties, and which, great and manifold though its evils were, bore no relation to the system which caused human beings to be exported for their money's worth from one country to another. CHAP.
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From slavery even in this form we are warranted in believing that the northern provinces of the Netherlands were generally free. It seems doubtful whether any portion of the inhabitants of Holland were ever in a state of actual servitude or bondage. They are spoken of at all times as divided into the three classes of freemen. Compared with the social condition of the inhabitants of the towns, that of the rural population was doubtless insecure, and calculated rather to retard than develope individual energy or public spirit. Domains of great extent belonged to the noblesse, who, being themselves tenants *in capite*, or the direct enfeoffees of the suzerain, exercised lordship over their territorial vassals, obliging them to be in all things lawful their liege men. And these "lawful things" were neither light nor few. Homage and relief, besides the payment of a yearly rent, were due by the occupier of every farm held in freehold upon every new succession to the inheritance; and while the lord was exempted from direct taxation, its burden rested heavily on the tiller of the soil. Rates for defraying the charges of government, rates for keeping the dykes in repair, rates for carrying on interminable wars,—all fell exclusively on him. He had his trials of temper and patience too, like folks of his class elsewhere. Laws of forestry and

Rural population.

CHAP.
VIII.

Erf-huur.

the chase existed, full of vexatious and pernicious privileges. Game of all sorts was from a very early period rigorously preserved. A tenant might not kill hares or rabbits on his own land, no matter what damage they committed; nor was he allowed to fish in the stream that flowed through his own farm, under severe penalties. And these restraints applied, of course, to the other occupants of the soil as well as to those who possessed tenancies in freehold. These were a numerous class; and, with the progress of society—a progress which, industrially and morally, they probably contributed not a little to accelerate—their relative proportion to the rest of the agricultural community steadily increased. Among this class many held their lands by a tenure in some places denominated *erf-huur*,⁸⁴ or heritable holding, as contradistinguished from that which, being created by the will of the lord, was necessarily terminable by the circumstances of escheat and forfeiture incident to his own title; and, further, by whatever stipulations as to time or service he might think fit to impose. In troublous times these insecurities of tenure were daily liable to realisation in forms of practical evil and hardship, the very apprehension of which must needs have tended in a variety of ways to retard improvement, and discourage agricultural industry. But the tenants, by heritable holding, were secured from such alarms. Like the copyholders of England,⁸⁵ their title was

⁸⁴ Davies, Vol. I. p. 103.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

practically inherent and indefeasible : the origin of the custom or system, or whatever else it may be called, among the two nations differed, it is true, as did its legal incidents ; but the tendency towards the creation of an independent agricultural middle class was in both the same, and in both the early uprising of such a class conduced to results wholly inestimable. Between the conflicting influences of haughty license and abject fear, of lofty caprice and base subserviency, of mischievous power and equally mischievous weakness,—amidst the ebb and flow of feudal violence—it was something,—a truly great thing, to have every where many firmly-rooted tenures to which rural industry might cling until the tempest should be overpast.

The peculiar forms of tenancy by erf-huur differed, perhaps, in the various provinces, but its spirit and example were more important than its forms. Land was frequently held either in perpetuity or for a long term of years, subject to resumption only for non-payment of rent for three successive years. Even in that case the lord could not enter or take possession without the judgment of a court of law duly obtained ; and, failing to assert his title for a space of thirty-five years, his claim of rights absolutely ceased, and the lands were secured thenceforth to the tenant and his representatives in fee-farm.⁸⁶

When wealth was accumulated by trade in the

⁸⁶ Davies, Vol. I. p. 104.

towns,⁸⁷ it was sometimes invested in land ; and there are indications that such an application of capital took place at an earlier period than in the neighbouring realms, whose fields were far more rich and fair. But industry values moral security above mere physical advantage. Without the one it can thrive and prosper ; without the other it has no heart to dig or drain, to sow or weed, to plant or build. And thus, while doubt and uncertainty, poverty and ignorance, covered the prolific plains of Germany and France, improvement and culture, intelligence and persevering care, began to spread in ever-widening circles round the early cities of the Sea-lands.

⁸⁷ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. chap. 2.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TOWNS.

“ Nor will it be from the purpose upon this search, to run a little higher into the antiquities of these countries. For though most men are contented only to see a river as it runs by them, and talk of the changes in it as they happen, when it is troubled or when clear—when it drowns the country in a flood or forsakes it in a drowth—yet he that would know the nature of the water and the causes of those accidents, so as to guess at their continuance or return, must find out its source, and observe with what strength it rises, what length it runs, and how many small streams fall in and feed it to such a height as makes it either delightful or terrible to the eye, and useful or dangerous to the country about it.”¹

It has been truly said by the latest and best of English historians of the Netherlands, that the towns of the Dutch “ were not, as in other nations, merely portions of the state, but the state itself was rather an aggregate of towns, each of which formed a commonwealth within itself, providing for its own defence, governed by its own laws, holding separate courts of justice, and administering its own finances.”² The effect of this conformation of society

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IX.
THE
DUTCH.

¹ Sir W. Temple, Observations upon the United Provinces, ch. 1, p. 7. (Fol. edit.)

² Davies, History of Holland, Vol. I. p. 76.

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may be regarded as peculiarly notable in two points of view : industrially, or in its tendency to develop the inventive and persevering genius of the people ; and nationally, in its influence on their political character and fortunes.

Charters of
Gertruy-
denberg and
Middleberg.

About 1221.

Local juris-
dictions.

The oldest charter of municipal privileges which has been preserved is that granted to the inhabitants of Gertruydenberg, a place even then of some importance. It bears date as early as 1213 ; but being much mutilated, its purport, as well as that of the immunities conceded in general to the rising cities of the period, may be inferred from the provisions which are still legible in the charter of the Zealanders, who dwelt at Middleberg in the island of Walcheren.³ Powers of local taxation and of administering justice were plenarily conferred, or rather, as it would seem, confirmed by the recognition of the usages that had spontaneously grown up among the town communities.

They had begun to apply themselves to trade of various kinds. Imperceptibly their scanty gains increased. The sense of insecurity grew intolerable. Property, in a sense wholly different from the possession of a certain portion of ground held by a feudal tenure, began to occupy the hopes and fears of many ; and, above all other considerations, rose the imperative necessity for local means of protecting it, for legally insuring its free use, and for summarily punishing its invasion. Labour, too, where-

³ Davies, Vol. I. p. 65.

by alone wealth could be produced, claimed urgently the defensive guardianship of order and law. For its redress, when wronged, the court of the baron, or of the count himself, could rarely avail. If justice were not nigh, it might as well be nowhere, for the working-man in those days.

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The men of Haarlem bound their city, in 1245, to furnish a company of men-at-arms for the service of the Count of Holland whensoever called upon, and to pay him 20*l.* a-year, on condition of being for ever exempted from all taxes imposed by him, and having the local jurisdiction exclusively given up to magistrates of their own choosing. Some charters specified the amount of punishment which should follow acts of violence or wrong, as in that of Dort in 1253, where fines are apportioned to different offences, death being reserved for cases of wilful murder.⁴

Haarlem
and Dort.

As internal traffic spread, new means of local revenue for local purposes became available. Tolls were levied upon the transit of goods from the inland districts to the sea, and upon the conveyance of foreign commodities, in like manner, into the interior;⁵ and the produce of the tax was devoted to the maintenance of the embankments, the deepening of the currents, and the erection of wharfs and quays. From experience of the well-working of the system, artificial extensions of their noiseless thoroughfares were undertaken. The people of each district would pay for their own,—a secret of local improve-

Local taxes.

⁴ Davies, Vol. I. p. 75.

⁵ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 30.

CHAP.
IX.Dated the
9th April,
1253.Municipal
system.Magis-
trates.

ment that lying on the surface every where, it has taken most nations of Europe many centuries to discover. Thus, upon representation of the nobles and burghers of the province, that the canal of Sparendam was needed and ought to be made, William II., count of Holland, issued an ordonnance that all vessels passing thereby should be compelled to pay from one to twelve pence according to their size.⁶

In every town, the feudal lord was represented by a resident officer named the schout, who was either appointed directly by him, or chosen out of a pannel of three who were presented to him by the municipality. His duties, as his title indicated, had regard to the vigilant execution of the laws and the preservation of the peace.⁷ The ordinary business of municipal government was conducted by a senate, of which the burgomasters and schepenen, two distinct classes of magistrates, and the pensionary or recorder were members.⁸ In the senate resided the power of local expenditure and of allocating the state contributions according to every man's ability.

To the burgomasters was especially confided the superintendence of the magazine and the maintenance of the walls, the discipline of the burgher-guards, the reception of strangers, and the proposition of measures for the health, improvement, and beautifying of the town. The schepenen constituted the vierschaar, or court before whom all ordinary

⁶ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. I. p. 173.

⁷ Guicciardini, Tom. I. p. 197.
⁸ Davies, Vol. I. p. 78.

offenders were brought, either on the accusation of the parties aggrieved or at the instance of the schout, or public prosecutor. Their jurisdiction was civil as well as criminal ; their power of inflicting penalties was, in most places, limited within certain bounds by the provisions of the charters ; but in Leyden, Dort, Rotterdam, and other towns, the right to inflict capital punishment was specially granted to them.⁹ In all cases, however, an appeal lay to the supreme court of the province.¹⁰

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A subordinate tribunal, consisting of eight of the junior citizens, presided over by one of the magistrates of experience, was called the Peace-makers. They formed a kind of arbitration-court, hearing only civil cases, in which both the parties appeared in person ; and endeavoured, by the equity of their decrees, to prevent litigation. How excellent a moral training must the performance of such a duty as that of "peace-makers" have been to the younger men of ability and ambition ! How wise the polity of such an institution among any people, but, above all, amongst a commercial people !¹¹

The Peace-makers.

The members of the senate held their offices for life, subject to forfeiture in case of proven crime, or removal of residence beyond the precincts of the city. Originally, it has been conjectured that they were universally chosen by the inhabitancy at

The senate.

⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 78.

¹⁰ Batavia Illustrata, Part I. p. 34.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 35.

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large ;¹² but, from the twelfth century, no trace is discernible of any such mode of popular election.¹³

In some places, the great council (*vroedschap*) appointed the burgomasters and *schepenen* in times comparatively modern ;¹⁴ but the example of Dort¹⁵ and Amsterdam seems, in the latter period, to have prevailed ; and in these it is certain, that all vacancies in the governing body were filled up by the remaining members.¹⁶

The town
assembly.

The *vroedschap* in many of the towns was of very ancient origin. In what manner it was primarily constituted, it is difficult to say. At first, perhaps, every head of a family or householder was entitled to participate in its deliberations ; and, if it was frequently convoked, and its opinion taken upon all matters of general importance, the effect was politically useful, as generative of a free and public spirit : and time had no understood value then. As trade increased and the town population grew more dense, to waste a day in needless talk became distasteful.¹⁷ The inconvenience of a multitudinous concourse, and the impracticability of deliberation in such assemblages, was felt, and naturally led to modifications of the original system. Might not a few do the ordinary business of the town as well as, nay better than a crowd ? If held accountable to the public, would not responsibility be more perfect ? Even at

¹² *Batavia Illustrata*, Part I.
p. 26.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 27.

¹⁴ *Davies*, Vol. I. p. 78.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Batavia Illustrata*, Part I. p.
28.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 33.

Hoorn, one of the most popular of the municipalities, we hear of a "rykdom," or property franchise, and of annual meetings of all who possessed such qualification for the election of members of the senate.¹⁸ CHAP.
IX.

The sagacity of the Dutch soon discerned that if popular responsibility could be preserved, the fewer the hands to which power was confided, and the fewer the places in each locality to be given away, the better. They were not a speech-making people. They loved order, method, and economy; they feared uncertainty and hated noise. As their profitable avocations multiplied, these dispositions led them to regard daily with less affection every thing that afforded opportunities for the display of professional rhetoric, or the talents for distraction. They would have low taxes, if possible; or, if that were not attainable, taxes that, though high, were usefully spent and faithfully accounted for. They would have ready and local justice, lenient, if that would suffice; if not, severe and exemplary; and for this they were content to confide large discretionary powers to a few able men.¹⁹ Responsible
local rule.

But they believed, that for the renewal of fiscal and judicial trusts, the imposition or modification of taxes, and the expression of the public sentiment in seasons of emergency, frequent or numerous assemblies were not necessary, and if not necessary, that they must be mischievous. While, therefore, the Public
opinion.

¹⁸ Davies, Vol. I. p. 78.

¹⁹ Basnage, Tom. I. ch. 2.

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rights of the town-councils were maintained, and, as in the Perpetual Edict,²⁰ continually reiterated and confirmed, the attention of the many was led away from political excitement and contention to safe and lucrative employment. The calm influence of opinion grew more and more powerful; but, like the growth of all great and fruitful things, it was silent, uneventful, and appreciable only in its results. To judge of the height and girth of the oak, we must measure its shadow.

Commercial
laws of the
thirteenth
century.

It may possibly be asked, however, Where are the early laws encouraging trade?—They are to be found along with the bandages of healthy children—nowhere. Interference, almost every where, was an after-thought, a juggle of cupidity in high places, or the rash vanity of ignorance playing the patron. No records of prices legislatively fixed—of limitations on particular callings—of differential customs—of navigation-laws? Alas! for the antiquarians in political error, none or next to none! On all these wordy questions, the simple chronicles of mediæval industry are nearly silent; and, truly, “there is a silence that is better than any speech.” Curious illustrations might be adduced of this.

Venice.

At Venice, where much of a kindred spirit prevailed, a code was, in 1242, directed to be compiled by authority of the government, which is still preserved. Its pages are occupied with provisions regarding the transmission of property, the conduct

²⁰ Batavia Illustrata, Part I. p. 33.

of civil suits, and the punishment of crime; but although compiled for the greatest trading community then in existence, it “contains no other regulation relating to commerce, than some directions respecting freights, averages, seamen’s wages,” &c.²¹

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A single example of the opposite policy must suffice. Notwithstanding the active competition of Pisa, Genoa, and Marseilles, the people of Barcelona had created a vast and various trade, by admitting the products of all nations on equal terms, and under every flag. When at the zenith of prosperity, the King of Aragon took their commercial interests under his sagacious patronage, and in 1227 issued an edict (possibly not an unpopular one at the time), prohibiting all foreign vessels from loading for Ceuta, Alexandria, or other important ports, if a Catalan ship was able and willing to take the cargo. This, which is probably the earliest navigation act on record,²² produced, in due time, its full fruit of evil. The commerce of Barcelona imperceptibly fell away; and when the period of hostile rivalry between protective Spain and the free-trading Provinces arrived, the issue of the contest was, in no small degree, decided by the unexpected naval superiority of the latter.

The chief trade of the Dutch in the thirteenth century was with the countries of the Baltic,²³ Scotland, and England. King John, whom neces-

Trade with
England.

²¹ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 393.

²² Ibid. p. 387.

²³ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. ch. 2.

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IX.

A.D. 1204.

sity taught wisdom in some things, took pains to invite the traders of France and the Low Countries into England, and to give them assurances of safety and protection for their persons and goods, whatever they might bring with them, on payment of the *quinzieme*. “The duties paid by merchants were anciently called *disme* or *quinzieme*, and they were payable to the king by traders for and in respect of their merchandises imported or exported.”²⁴ They were levied *ad valorem* upon all manner of goods, whether in foreign or native hands, and consequently assumed the alternative form of a custom or excise duty, which yielded about 4000*l.* in the year to the royal treasury.

Supplies of
food.

In the ordinary course of things at this period England was not only capable of growing more corn, and other food, than her population could consume, but she usually did so, and exported annually a portion of her surplus to the Netherlands. In these, on the contrary, the inhabitants of Holland, Zealand, and Friezland, if not others of the northern provinces, never subsisted upon native food alone; but, notwithstanding all their unwearied perseverance in reclamation and agriculture, were forced to rely to a great extent on supplies imported. Yet dearth, which is no respecter of countries, fell upon Britain frequently. On one remarkable occasion the distress of the population has been vividly depicted by the faithful chronicler of Henry III.’s unhappy

²⁴ Madox, ch. 18, § 3, p. 529.

reign,²⁵ who, after a long account of their deplorable condition, notes that the famine continued to be sore in the land, until ships laden with corn arrived from Holland and other places.

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The English parliament, enraged by the King's attachment to foreigners, to the exclusion of his own subjects from posts of trust and power, declared that English wool should, in future, be worked up into cloths at home, instead of being sent abroad; and that none should wear any apparel that was not of native manufacture. But the superior skill of the Low Countries could afford to despise these blind attempts to remedy the King's blind partiality. The good reason that existed for demanding native-born judges, ministers, and officers, did not exist for wearing exclusively home-wrought fabrics. Difficulties, that feudal legislation troubled not its passionate brain to consider, must have speedily arisen in the effort to exclude the cheaper and better fabrics of Holland and Flanders, and we, accordingly, hear no more of these attempts at prohibition for some time.²⁶

Commercial
interdicts.

Civil war between Henry and the Barons rent the kingdom for a considerable period, and, in the absence of any efficient check on violence and theft, property was rendered insecure and foreign trade well-nigh impossible. Pirates infested every port and plundered the merchant-vessels. When the people

The barons'
advice con-
cerning
trade.

²⁵ Matthew Paris, pp. 958, 963.

²⁶ Statutes of Henry III. from 1258 to 1261.

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complained, in 1264, the Barons, through their chief leader, the Earl of Leicester, consoled them by the assurance that foreign traffic was by no means indispensable, that England could very well grow enough for all her wants, and that, if they would but side with them, expel all strangers and exclude all foreign goods, the land would have abundance and peace.²⁸ We are not told what effect these sagacious projects, for securing national prosperity, produced at the time, or how far they tended to strengthen the King's party in the great towns.

English
wool inter-
dicted.

A quarrel having arisen between Henry III. and Margaret of Flanders, under whose regency Holland and Zealand, during the minority of their hereditary lord, then were, regarding certain arrears of pay alleged to be due by the King of England for military services abroad, the Countess was induced, in 1271, to seize on all the wool in her dominions which was supposed to be of English growth, although much of it had become the property of her own subjects. By way of retaliation, Henry confiscated all goods of foreign manufacture which were to be found in the kingdom, and distributed the proceeds,—estimated at eight thousand pounds,—among the sufferers.²⁹ Soon after the accession of Edward I. rigorous measures were adopted interdicting altogether the exportation of wool. The looms of the Netherlands, suddenly bereft of their

²⁸ Matthew Westminster, p. 396; Chron. Wikes, pp. 61–65.

²⁹ Rymer, Fœdera, Tom. I. pp. 250, 273; Tom. II. p. 82.

customary supply, stood idle ; and the injury inflicted on the growers of wool in England must necessarily have been great, though not, perhaps, felt by the less numerous class of the community who were the consumers of Netherland cloth, inasmuch as all attempts to enforce its exclusion proved ineffectual.³⁰ A license was given to certain Florentine traders to carry wool from England to the Dutch and Belgian ports,—a mode of doing good by stealth, or furtively abating the evil of their own measures, which does not seem peculiar to governments of the thirteenth century. Much injury to the fair trader must, notwithstanding, have been done ; and how long this injury would have been unresistingly endured it were hard to conjecture ; but ere popular patience was exhausted the government of Flanders sought for a reconciliation ; and an interview was arranged between the son of the Countess and the King. Edward appeared at Montreuil, attended by a deputation of London merchants, to discuss the terms proposed. Reparation was guaranteed to all whose property had been seized ; an apology was tendered by the young Count for the error of his mother ; and the free commerce of the countries was restored.³¹

24th June,
1274.

It would seem that in the quarrel with England the merchants of Zealand and Holland had peculiarly been involved ; and the interdict, which had been removed as far as the Flemings were con-

Zealand
privateers.

³⁰ Rymer, *Fœdera*, Tom. II. p. 50.

³¹ *Ibid.* pp. 24–34.

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cerned, deprived them still of the use of English wool. The manufacturers, in consequence, being much aggrieved, certain of them, “in order to make good their damage,” fitted out fourteen armed vessels, termed *köggen*, “by means of which they did the Londoners much hurt. This is the first mention made of the Zealand privateers,”³² which, in more eventful days, were destined to perform a nobler part. But the war being ended, the intercourse between the two countries was restored to its former intimacy. An act of the English parliament, called the statute of Acton-burnel, gave foreign merchants “new and more speedy remedies for the recovery of their just debts;” reciting as cause why such provisions were resorted to, that for want of it “many merchants had withdrawn to come into the realm with their merchandises, to the damage as well of the merchants as of the whole realm.”³³ And a like institution existing amongst the Dutch, a new treaty of commerce was concluded between England and Holland, “giving a mutual freedom to trade,”³⁴—appointing certain places of public security as depôts for English merchandise imported into the Netherlands, and specifically guaranteeing to the Dutch the right of fishing off Yarmouth,³⁵ whither they had long been accustomed to resort in the herring season, and where peculiar inducements to do so would seem to have

³² Yair, p. 12.

³³ 11 Edward I.

³⁴ Yair, p. 15.

³⁵ Rymer, Fœdera, Tom. II.
p. 106.

been designedly held out to them by the terms of a charter granted to that town by King John.³⁶

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IX.

In the fourteenth year of Edward I., there being then certain affairs to be settled between the King and the Count of Flanders relating to traffic, the King, by his writ, commands the Barons of the Exchequer that, when the Count should send over commissioners to treat of the said matters, they should postpone other business and despatch those affairs, taking care withal that due justice be done to the English merchants, according to a convention entered into by the King and the Count. The same year John Duraunt was commanded by the King's writ to "assist in the negotiation."³⁷ In 1295 we are told of new disputes having arisen about the tax on wool, levied without consent of parliament, in consequence of which the payment was refused in several parts of the kingdom. The Barons thereupon appealed to the King; by whom fresh orders were issued on the subject: and evidence might be accumulated without end to shew the importance which the trade between the countries had assumed.³⁸

Negotia-
tions re-
garding
trade.
A.D. 1284.

That it was already great the records of the sums raised in export duty at Hull, Boston, York, Southampton, Ipswich, Newcastle, Yarmouth, Bristol, and other places, prove; and in London, where the

Export
duty on
wool for
revenue.

³⁶ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 374.

³⁷ Madox, chap. 22, § 7, p. 612.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 613.

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IX.

A.D. 1297.

weavers were already grown into a numerous and opulent guild, the revenue derivable from the customs on exported wool amounted to a considerable sum.³⁹ Nevertheless, the effects of the new burden were heavily felt; and in the following year, "for so much as the more part of the commonalty of the realm found themselves sore grieved with the maletent of wools, to wit, the toll of forty shillings for every sack, and had made petition to release the same," the King consented to relinquish the increased duty, and promised not to exact any such again without their common assent.⁴⁰ Proclamation was, moreover, ordered to be made every where by the sheriffs, that merchants who designed to export wools and leathers might safely carry them to the several ports, paying the old duties only, viz., half a mark for every sack of wool, and a mark for every last of leather.⁴¹

About 1299.

Somewhat later, Edward would fain have persuaded the Count of Flanders to interdict all trade with the Scots, against whom the King of England was then engaged in his memorable contest. But the Scots were old friends and customers of the Flemings;⁴² and Count Robert called to mind, perhaps, that it was "by the entire freedom from all tolls," and the security of traffic granted by his ancestors to foreign merchants, that the great annual

³⁹ Madox, chap. 18, § 5, p. 536.⁴⁰ 25 Edward I. ch. 7.⁴¹ Madox, ch. 8, p. 537, § 5.⁴² Yair, p. 21.

fairs had been firste stablished, and the basis laid of his country's opulence and power.⁴³ So he made answer to his royal ally, that Flanders was "a country open to all the world, and that every person should find in it free admission."⁴⁴ With casual interruptions, the export of the raw material from England continued to the Netherlands, though the parliaments of Edward did not scruple to retain the duty of forty shillings on every sack entered outwards that contained twenty-six stones of wool,—a burden which none but a firmly established trade could at the period have been able to endure.

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IX.

A.D. 1296.

In proportion as industry throve, freedom grew strong also. They clung to each other, as brethren of the same stock; the same spirit of independence—individual, municipal, and, in due time, national—is traceable through all their struggles. Without the hard coin of the towns, the main dykes could not have been begun. These once formed, other works appeared desirable and feasible, for the estates of the lord were become more arable; and the security of the burgher was rendered more complete, and the latter was obtained as the price of the money expended in the creation of the former; thus both were gainers, and by each other's gain. And year by year the good work prospered, feudalism continuing to barter its powers of misrule for solid contributions, which industry could always

Industry
and free-
dom.⁴³ De Witt, Part I. chap. 2.⁴⁴ Cronyk Van Vlanderen, in Yair, p. 23.

CHAP.
IX.Change in
municipal
policy.

find means to raise for the purchase of peace and liberty.

Certain changes in municipal polity appear to have taken place, on the aim of which only we can here observe. The changes in the organisation of the municipal system took place so gradually and with so little of internal contention, that we can hardly fix the time or assign historically the circumstances that may have, more or less, conduced to them. It appears wholly unreasonable to ascribe the result to loss of popular spirit or to the sinister intrigues of an oligarchic faction. However it may be supposed to have cherished the subsequent growth of such a party, there is little reason for supposing that the sturdy and free-hearted men who formed the *schutterye*, or *burgher-guards*,⁴⁵ of Holland in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, would have complacently suffered the usurpation of any rights which they deemed valuable by a few individuals or families of their own order, and in the cities no class higher in rank or influence existed. Exclusive and corrupt tendencies, it is true, manifested themselves at a subsequent period in connexion with what we should call the close corporations; and, even were it not so, few will be found to defend the self-elective scheme introduced in the senates of several great towns. But we must beware of confounding the appearance of the symptoms with the presence of the disease. While the tone of

⁴⁵ *Recherches sur le Commerce*, Tom. II. p. 49.

public feeling and opinion continued healthful, we hear no complaints of the theoretically imperfect and, to our view, narrow organisation of these bodies. CHAP.
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And such was the municipal constitution of Holland, and its boast, not that in this year or that it was fabricated by popular strength, or conferred by lenient despotism, but that, imperceptibly, it grew so deep, and broad, and strong, that neither the might of tyranny could overthrow, nor the weakness of the multitude destroy it.

Its predominant characteristic from the first may be said to have been the maintenance of order ; but for this neither centralised police nor mercenary legions were required, for the public benefit was but the realised wish of the sober and thoughtful men who, having many interests in common, co-operated to conserve them, and believed that those interests, of property, of character, and of life, could be nowhere so safe as in local hands. The charters of Dutch cities, referable to different periods and adapted to different local wants and peculiarities of circumstance, present nothing like materials for a uniform description.⁴⁶ Neither does the organic structure of the mediæval municipalities generally square with our ideas of rating, franchise, or tenure of office. Happily for the Netherlands, the empiricism of uniformity was as yet unknown. The thrifty burghers were simple, business-like folk, whose hands were full of actual work, and whose

Absence of
uniformity.

⁴⁶ Batavia Illustrata, Part I. ch. 2, §§ 3-6.

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heads seem to have been busied only with what would answer their own towns, for which they seem to have been decidedly of opinion that they respectively knew best what would answer. And so, in like manner, when assembled in their provincial councils or "states" to provide for the internal wants of their several districts, they appear to have been wholly engrossed with the matters in hand, and to have diligently striven to find how best, and cheapest, and quickest, the wants of each province, or its reasonable wishes, might be met, without caring much whether the other provinces did likewise or not; or how, in after times, the thing might look in history. Enough for them, if their local institutions answered the local purpose, and that the general interest was secured, though by an infinitely varied and theoretically incongruous diversity of ways. Uniformity in the Dutch cities there was none; but there was order in each of them, and order was popular every where, because every where the people felt that it was their own. The titles of functionaries and the mode of their appointment varied; but they kept the peace without difficulty and administered justice well.

Benefits of
order and
respect for
law.

It sounds almost like a truism to say, that upon this exact and instinctive habit of order the security of property and industrial enterprise depends. But truisms are just those things that people most frequently need to be reminded of, and which they often do not practically believe at all. The look of truth wears off in use like the sharp outline of a

coin ; and those of most unquestionable value, such as we call truisms, need continually to be re-issued with some fresh image and current superscription of the day. In the Netherlands, as elsewhere, during feudal times, legal security and order existed only within the precincts of the municipalities, or their immediate vicinage. Industry, wealth, and knowledge, were still wall-fruits, and where the wall was not, they were not to be found. Nor let the imperfect illustration suggest an erroneous conception that mere physical security was the great advantage gained.

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The habits of order and the consequent spirit of loyalty engendered by the long possession of local immunities may be truly said to have been wholly inestimable. Arts may civilise the intellect, and religion sublimiate the heart, and intercourse with other nations round the rude edge of native manners ; but political civilisation can only come of the long uninterrupted use and exercise of widely-diffused liberties, and the instinctive identification of the worth and property of the community with the administration of the law. That the law be intrinsically just is well ; that it be firmly, and humanely, and equally administered, is still better : but either are temporarily attainable under a *régime* ungrateful to the feelings of society, unassociated with its reverence and pride, and neither have, consequently, any tenure of continuance beyond the propitious contingencies of good fortune. The absolute ruler may be popular, and deservedly so ;

Spirit of
loyalty.

CHAP.
IX.

but allegiance there is personal, and therefore subject to incessant, sudden, and incalculable fluctuations ; in other words, there is political barbarism. On the other hand, there may be all the symmetry of theoretically faultless rule, without applicability, because without appreciation—an admirable machine without motive power—a stage-tree, that can never shelter, because it has never grown. But where we find usages of self-rule and local authority, rights of self-assessment and habits of municipal administration, involving a large and adequate proportion of the community in their varied intersecting circles of reciprocal protection and command, there also we behold allegiance unbroken in its early growth by the fickle winds of power, deep-rooted in the soil, and covering with its rich and ever-green verdure the often unsymmetrical, but long-endearred, institutions of the land.

Flemish
towns.

Striking illustrations of the advantage reaped by Holland from the order and security that was established there and was known to be so, might be drawn from the vicissitudes of trade in the adjacent countries, and its migrations in quest of safety and freedom. Though not, perhaps, as early acquainted with the art of weaving fabrics of wool as the Dutch, the people of Flanders improved the manufacture so rapidly, that it seemed to have struck wider root in their country, and its fame became universally known.⁴⁷ Their neighbourhood to France enabled the Flemings to carry their

⁴⁷ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 33.

“products into that fruitful land where the inhabitants were not only able to feed themselves, but also, by the superfluous growth of their country, to put themselves into good apparel.”⁴⁸ Count Boude-
 CHAP. IX. About 960.
 wyn III., of Flanders, considerably improved the trade by setting up yearly fairs or markets in several places, whereat no duty or toll for any goods either brought in or sent out was paid.

During the three ensuing centuries the woollen trade continued to improve, and to enrich the people of Flanders. The first interruption to their manufacturing prosperity arose from certain regulations by the halls or guilds, enacted professedly to prevent fraud and the deterioration of the fabrics, but, by their illiberality and rigour, tending, in effect, to confine the manufacture to particular towns, and to subject it there to the trammels of monopolising corporations.⁴⁹ “By this attempt at *compulsion*,” says De Witt, “*which is ever most hurtful to industry*, much of the weaving trade was driven out of the towns into the villages; then the wars between France and Flanders drove it from the villages into Brabant. Yet, though they had the experience of all this before them, the Brabanters, being no-wise more prudent, by similar means, namely, the restrictions imposed by the halls,”⁵⁰ and the imposition of heavy duties, provoked many tumults and uproars among the manufacturing population.

⁴⁸ De Witt, Part I. ch. 11.

⁴⁹ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 467.

⁵⁰ De Witt, Part I. ch. 11.

CHAP.
IX.
Tumults at
Ghent.

At Ghent serious disturbances were caused among the weavers and others engaged in the wool-len manufacture, by similar restrictive measures, in which several citizens and two of the magistrates were killed.⁵¹ Not very long afterwards a combination of the workmen at Ypres demanded the absolute suppression of certain rival establishments in the adjacent towns of Langemarck and Poperingen;⁵² and in the tumult which ensued the mayor and ten of the city magistrates were slain.⁵³

At Bruges.

Still more sanguinary were the conflicts at Bruges, where, in 1301, an outbreak was headed by a man named Pieter de Koning, the warden or dean of the guild of the weavers;⁵⁴ what was the precise amount of their demands it is not easy to discover; but being refused by the municipal authorities, the multitude proceeded to violence, and ere peace could be restored fifteen hundred persons perished.⁵⁵ These excesses were the less excusable from the prosperity and freedom which the inhabitants of these great cities, then at the zenith of their fame, enjoyed. But neither liberty nor commerce will permanently abide with those who appreciate them not with loyalty and reverence. Sensitive to insult or wrong, they are easily alienated, and banished once they are hard to be won back again.

⁵¹ De Witt, Part I. chap. 11.

⁵² Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 33, note 27.

⁵³ De Witt, ut supra.

⁵⁴ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 34, note 28.

⁵⁵ De Witt, ut supra.

Untaught by these examples, the very same consequences were brought about in Brabant, where, at Louvain, in a violent outbreak of the weavers and others, many of the magistrates were slain in the Hôtel de Ville. Some of the manufacturers on that occasion emigrated to England, where they introduced the knowledge of their art; but many more, both Flemings and Brabanters, settled in the parts beyond the Meuse, at Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Leyden.⁵⁶

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IX.

Disorders in
Brabant.

A curious fate that they should settle especially there,—as we shall hereafter see. These restless, enterprising, outlawed men, finding it impossible to work peaceably in Flanders or Brabant, come, with no other character for passport than their knack of weaving, and probably with no other capital than their labour, among the Dutch, and thenceforth of turbulence and crime we hear no more. They could not live contentedly in wealthy Bruges or Ghent, yet are they adopted into the frugal citizenship of Amsterdam, and learn to live in quiet and do well within the humble walls of Leyden. For Leyden was then unknown to fame; but, like other Dutch cities, it had not merely the custom of self-direction and control, but the spirit of order, and the wholesome sense of its sacred character and importance. It cheerfully accepted the skill and courage of the Belgian refugees. It

Fugitives
settle at
Leyden.

⁵⁶ De Witt, Part I. chap. 11.

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IX.

relied upon the blended influences of freedom and municipal authority to attach these hitherto unruly and misguided men to the interests of subordination and peace; their labour and knowledge of their particular craft helped to make Leyden rich; and in the day when the trial of its faith came, the orderly sons of the Flemish rioters were not found wanting.

Industrial
hospitality.

Other cities also welcomed the immigrants. Many individuals of distinction were from time to time fain to seek refuge in the provinces from the troubles of their own more naturally favoured but politically less happy land.⁵⁷ Men of worth or of refinement,—those who brought with them some peculiar skill or peculiar means of employing labour,—operatives or men of family,—all were sure of a free and safe resting-place, which, if they would, they might make their future home. Far from encountering the base and barbarous jealousy that too frequently besets the industrious stranger, they were recognised with pride, and regarded as contributors to the gathering stock of national wealth and power. “Our cities throve and grew populous,” says a native writer, “and in the same proportion we progressed in comfort and prosperity; and thus, long before the epoch of the revolution in the sixteenth century, it might be said that Holland was well peopled, and possessed of great resources.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 36, note 31.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Tom. II. p. 36.

In these days mention first begins to be made of the rising town of Amsterdam, though its origin dates somewhat earlier. In 1205, a low and profitless marsh upon the coast of Holland, not far from the confines of Utrecht, had been partially drained by a dam raised upon the hitherto squandered stream of the Amstel. Near this dam a few huts were tenanted by poor men who earned a scanty livelihood by fishing in the Zuyder Sea ;⁵⁹ but so uninviting seemed that barren and desolate spot, that a century later Amstel-dam was still an obscure seafaring town, or rather hamlet. Its subsequent progress was more rapid. The spirit of the land was stirring within it, and every portion of it thrilled with new energy and life. Some of the fugitive artisans from Flanders saw in the thriving village safety and peace, and added what wealth they had, and, what was better, their manufacturing intelligence and skill, to the humble hamlet's store. Amsteldam was early admitted to the fellowship of the Hanse League ; and, in 1342, having outgrown its primary limits, required to be enlarged. For this an expensive process, that of driving piles into the swampy plain, was necessary ; and to this circumstance, no doubt, it is owing that the date of each successive enlargement has been so accurately recorded.⁶⁰

CHAP.
IX.
Rise of Amsterdam.

A.D. 1300.

Although the woollen manufacture continued to exist during the remainder of the fourteenth cen-

Diffusion of
manufacturing skill.

⁵⁹ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 372.

⁶⁰ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. ch. 1.

CHAP.
IX.

A.D. 1337.

Colony to
England.

A.D. 1338.

ture in Flanders and Brabant, it was no longer peculiarly there. The towns of Zealand and Guelderland henceforth share largely in its advantages. Sardam and Leyden,⁶¹ Breda and Bergen-op-Zoom, begin to be reckoned among its established seats, as well as Malines, Bruges, and Louvain; and we find them named together in the English regulations of the period regarding the export of wool.⁶² But the injury self-inflicted on the Belgian trade seems never to have been wholly repaired; and a sense of this may perhaps have contributed to foment the jealousy that is betrayed in the oldest chroniclers of the rival nations.⁶³

The Dutch, in their turn, received invitations also. When Edward III. was endeavouring to plant the woollen manufacture in England, he gave what were termed letters of protection, whereby, in accordance with the ideas of the time, certain foreign merchants named, and their adherents, were invested with legal sanction to take up their abode within the realm, and became entitled to claim the interposition of royalty in case of injury or molestation. Several of these letters were granted to the weavers of Brabant, others to their neighbours of Zealand. One of the latter runs somewhat thus: "Know ye, &c., that we have received into our kingdom of England Lestinus de Holland, John de

⁶¹ Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 41.

⁶² Rymer, Fœdera, Vol. IV. p. 757.

⁶³ See Cronyk van Vlanderen, in Yair, Account of the Scotch Trade in the Netherlands, p. 3.

Hilford, Lestinus Neuhone, William Favehales, Isaac Gerard, Peter Hundrepen, Bohdonus de Thorneck, John de Overnulle, Nicholas Underchapel, John de Catherine, Cornelius Huss, John de Semptilace, John Bishop, Cornelius Storthyn, and Gosinus Cornisthwait, and some other workers in wool, and clothiers, with their men and their servants, from the province of Zealand, in order that they may carry on here their woollen manufacture in time to come, &c. ; and, being desirous that they should so come into our kingdom, we accord them all manner of security," &c. &c.⁶⁴

The general trade with England continuing to increase, by an act passed at the commencement of Edward III.'s reign the parliament declared that all staples, or places having peculiar privileges and monopolies of sale, both abroad and at home, which had been ordained by kings in times past should cease ; and that all merchants, strangers, and others should be henceforth free to "go and come with their merchandise into England, after the tenour of the great charter."⁶⁵

Sound notions of trade were still more fully expressed soon after in an English statute, which, with no other preamble than that excellent one, "the king desiring the profit of his people," ordains that thenceforth "all merchants, strangers, and denizens, and all other and every of them, of what estate or condition soever they be, that will buy or

CHAP.
IX.

Abolition of
staples.

A statute of
free-trade.
A.D. 1335.

⁶⁴ Rymer, *Fœdera*, Vol. IV. p. 751. ⁶⁵ 2 Edward III. chap. 9.

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IX.

sell corn, flesh, fish, wools, cloths, wares, merchandises, and all other things vendible, from whence-soever they come, by foreigners or denizens, at what place soever it be,—city, borough, town, port of the sea, fair, market, or elsewhere within the realm, within franchise or without, may freely, without interruption, sell them to what persons it shall please them, as well to foreigners as denizens, except always the enemies of the king and realm.” Persons molested or interrupted in the way of their trade, whether natives or foreigners, are to be compensated in double damages ; and if the magistracy of the churlish place fail to see justice done to the aggrieved, its charter and privileges shall be suspended by the crown.⁶⁶

Subsidies of
English
wool.

So established was the value and so great the growth of wool in England at this period, that in the scarcity of money taxes were as often assessed in it as in gold or corn. When the parliament in 1338 were called on to vote supplies for the war with France, they granted one half the wools grown on the lands of the laity of all classes for the year, and the value of nine marks for every sack of wool belonging to the clergy ; they further gave a fifteenth, to be paid by the commonalty, in wool, the price of every stone (of 14 lb) being then about two shillings. And now “the wools which were gathered for the king’s use, amounting to ten thousand sacks, were sent into Brabant, under the direction

⁶⁶ 9 Edward III. chap. 1, Stat. Large, Vol. I. pp. 212, 213.

of two noble merchants, the Earls of Northampton and Suffolk, who sold the same in Upper Germany for 40*l.* a sack, amounting in all to 400,000*l.* By these means the King became exceeding strong in the sinews of war: but the country became thereby so exhausted of money, that victuals and other commodities became exceeding cheap; a quarter of wheat was sold at London for two shillings, and a fat ox for six and eight pence.”⁶⁷

In payment for the large quantities of raw materials which they imported annually, the Dutch sent to England, not only cloths, but, as we are told, a great variety of other articles. These not being enumerated, the patriotic apprehensions of the national chronicler were excited lest his countrymen were paying a large balance of trade in hard coin. But the evidence that has been preserved of the varied commerce which had sprung up between the Netherlanders and the Northern nations, and the amount of commodities of general utility obtained from the latter, coupled with the fact stated by Grotius, that already many ships belonging to Goedereede, Walcheren, Gravesande, Schouwen, and the Texel, were continually employed in the English trade,—were no other proof existent, would suffice to shew that either with manufactures of their own, or the produce of other countries re-exported, the Dutch were able to pay for English wool and corn.⁶⁸

CHAP.
IX.

Payment
for imports.

⁶⁷ Parl. Hist. Vol. I. pp. 95, 96.

⁶⁸ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 28, et seq.

CHAP.
IX.
—
Beginnings
of protec-
tion in Eng-
land.

While free competition continued, with few exceptions, to form the guiding principle of the Dutch, incoherent efforts to establish protection and prohibition early manifest themselves in English policy. When King Edward demanded subsidies from the parliament which met at Nottingham in the autumn of 1336, they granted him, beside the usual property-taxes, a duty of forty shillings a sack on all wool exported by native merchants, and sixty shillings on all exported by foreigners. The next year a parliament was held at Westminster, who went still further in the same direction, enacting that “*no wool* of English growth should be transported beyond the seas; and that all clothworkers should be received from whatever foreign parts they should come, and fit places should be assigned them with divers liberties and privileges, and that they should have a certain allowance from the King till they might be fixed in a way of living by their trade.” It was also ordained that none should wear any cloths wrought beyond the sea, or thereafter to be imported, except the king, queen, and their children.⁶⁹

Policy of the
Dutch.

Far different was the consistent policy of the Dutch. No people were ever more fully conscious of the value of such a manufacture as that of wool; none knew better the tendency of competition to abate present price and profit. We have seen how early the art of weaving was known to them; how

⁶⁹ Parl. Hist. Vol. I. pp. 94, 95.

when the Belgians by their ingenuity and enterprise had outstripped them in its practical pursuit, they opened their gates to them, and courted their migration amongst them. We have noted the consequent change, and their subsequent progress in the trade. What, then, was their policy in the hour of success and prosperity? Did they seek to avail themselves of the prestige when gained, or forbid the rising competition of other countries, which like themselves were ambitious of being accounted manufacturers? To their honour be it said the Dutch evinced, in general, a sense of right and sound policy in such matters, very far, indeed, beyond any of their neighbours, and they adhered to the principles of free trade under temptations and provocations which might well have excused their temporary departure from them. The English, like them, had been fain to import artisans skilled in the woollen manufacture from Flanders; but hardly were the rudiments of the art implanted when the work of prohibition began. Statutes and royal proclamations not only forbade the bringing in of foreign cloths, but frequently interdicted the export of the raw material to other countries; and Holland was amongst the number. The quantity of English and Irish wool, nevertheless, imported, as already observed, was very great. An old writer, in depicting the universality of her dealings with surrounding countries, uses the expression, "Ireland is her sheepwalk." And the Hollanders, unmoved by bad example, and unprovoked to re-

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taliation, continued “on the contrary to permit the English to bring into their ports all manner of goods, whether they were of the growth of England or not; cloths of their own manufacture, and stuffs both of silk and wool,” of the coarser sorts, for which there was found a ready sale, especially among the Germans who came to purchase them. The English had been allowed freely to establish their staple, or public mart, in the first instance, at Middleberg in Zealand, and subsequently at Rotterdam “and Dort, where the magistrates granted them special privileges for the express purpose;”⁷⁰ and when the policy of maintaining these peculiar places of sale was abandoned, English goods were admitted with equal facility at various ports.

6 Dec. 1321.

With the traders of Scotland an interchange of friendly guarantees early took place. Letters of safe conduct were given by William IV., of Holland, to Stephen Fourbour, burgess of Berwick, and Thomas Well, burgess of St. Andrew's, with their companions, to come, stay, and go, as they might require, in the counties of Zealand, Holland, and West Friezland;⁷¹ and two years later, Robert Bruce, king of the Scots, “grants in return to all merchants from Holland, Zealand, and West Friezland, who shall come with their merchandise, a free ingress and egress to any part of his kingdom, wherever they please to land; desiring that they,

10 Aug.
1323.

⁷⁰ Huet, *Mémoires sur le Commerce des Hollandois*, p. 85.

⁷¹ *Groot Charter Boek*, Vol. II. p. 268: in Yair, p. 6.

with their ships and all their goods, should be honourably treated, and that they should be suffered freely to dispose of their merchandise according to the laws and usages of the country.”⁷² CHAP.
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“Holland’s dependence being ever on the sea,”⁷³ Shipping. the growth of her marine, did the means for unfolding it exist, would be necessarily full of interest and instruction. Unfortunately, however, there is no part of her history for which the materials are more scanty. How in the third century the Batavians came to have an armed flotilla powerful enough, when they were at enmity with Rome, to defeat and capture her beaked galleys; — how, suddenly inspired with a wild thirst of adventure, they sailed to the Mediterranean and spread the terror of their name along the coasts of Spain, Sicily, and Lybia;—how the more peaceful navigation of the Frisians was devoted rather to fishery and commerce than to war, and, while nowise inferior in intrepidity, surpassed that of earlier days in diversity and skill:—of all this, and the accompanying progress of trade, history seems unobservant and unconscious in its anxiety to chronicle deeds of brigandage and spoil.⁷⁴ For sake of these history has forgotten to tell us how the people whose country was the most utterly destitute by nature of the materials of ship-building,⁷⁵ came to build

⁷² Yair, p. 8.

⁷³ De Witt, Part I. ch. 1.

⁷⁴ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 7.

⁷⁵ De Witt, Part I. ch. 3.

CHAP. IX. innumerable vessels suited to every species of navigation.

Resist the
Sea-kings.
A.D. 857.

The efficiency of the Dutch fleet is significantly indicated by the manner in which they were enabled to punish the marauding Sea-kings, who in the ninth century had become the source of universal apprehension. Some depredations having been committed in Walcheren, the hardy Zealanders resolved not to await a second attack, but fitting out a powerful squadron, to the amazement of the Northmen, appeared in the Baltic demanding reparation. They thus shewed them that there was at least one nation whose shores they could not insult with impunity;⁷⁶ and the freebooters for a long time troubled them no more.

A.D. 897.

We are told, indeed, that King Alfred did not admire the build of their ships, and the annalist of his reign boasts that he devised a model superior to that of the Danish and Frisian vessels then in most esteem.⁷⁷ But of the comparative merits of the Saxon fleet we have no means of judging.

Crusades.

In 1217, Count William undertook the crusade with twelve large ships, which set sail from the Meuse, and were joined by a great number of smaller craft⁷⁸ belonging to the Friezlanders. Casting anchor in the Tagus, their aid was implored by the Portuguese monarch against the Moors. Some difference hence arose among the

⁷⁶ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 8.

⁷⁷ Saxon Chronicle, 98.

⁷⁸ "Nommes en Latin *Cogones*."—La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 10.

chiefs. The Friezlanders had vowed to make all speed for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre, and would not tarry by the way; while the Hollanders, under Count William, thought themselves at liberty to remain some months for the vindication of their ally. Having chastised the Western Saracens,—not without due recompense for their services,—they overtook their kinsmen the following spring before Acre. Both sections of the Netherland force distinguished themselves in the campaign, more especially at the siege of Damietta, after which they returned home.⁷⁹ It is manifest, that without the pre-existence of an extensive marine and skilful seamen, such an undertaking, with the limited resources of Holland, would have been either impossible or unsuccessful. The troops of France and Germany were transported to Palestine in Venetian and Genoese vessels; the Dutch were borne thither in their own.

Thenceforward the ports of Holland, Friesland, and Zealand, began to be regarded as the normal schools of European seamanship. Great numbers of vessels, both for their own expanding trade and for that of other countries, were built at Zierickzee, Amsterdam, Staveren, and other places every year. The quarrels of their princes with their Flemish and German contemporaries were frequently determined by naval conflicts; and for commercial purposes they equipped and manned a surprising number of small craft, as well as many ships of

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Ship-build-
ing and
navigation.

⁷⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 64.

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burden. Prompt to avail themselves of every new expedient that promised to contribute to the advancement of their nautical skill or mercantile resources, the memorable discovery of the compass in the latter end of the thirteenth century seems to have befallen just at the moment when they were in a position that enabled them to turn its advantages to most account. “What singular good fortune!”—Say rather, What singular worth and work, whereby these brave Netherlanders had put themselves into a condition to benefit more than others by such unlooked-for discoveries when they came!

The magnet,
A.D. 1200.

Although the power of the loadstone to attract iron was known to the ancients, its polarity was not discovered until the middle ages. In an old French rhymmer, Hugon de Berey, a curious account is given of the way in which the mariners used, in his time, to fasten a needle in a piece of straw, and having rubbed it with a brown, ill-looking stone, called by them *manete*, set it floating in a vessel of water; then, when the night was dark, and the north star hidden, this needle pointed to its place in the heavens; and, “by this art which cannot deceive, they steer their vessel’s course.”⁸⁰

A.D. 1302.

The claims of Gioja, a citizen of Amalfi, to the invention of the compass, are more generally recognised, as by his skill the use of this wonderful power was first rendered, by means of certain mechanical appliances, generally available.

⁸⁰ Guiot, ap. Fauchet, Recueil de la Poésie Française, p. 155, in Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 362.

The Danes, Venetians, and Barcelonese, have also their pretensions to the invention.

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A new and remarkable influence, both commercial and political, began, towards the end of the thirteenth century, to be felt among the industrial communities of northern Europe, and especially among the inhabitants of the maritime Netherlands. More than a century had elapsed since the Dutch, who had already earned for themselves the reputation of good subjects and useful members of society, had, under circumstances of signal interest, planted a colony in Lower Germany. The princes of Holstein and Brandenburg, when they had cleared large tracts of their dominions of the predatory hordes of the Sclavi, by whom they had been long infested, besought Holland, Utrecht, and Friezland, to send them a sufficient number of families to colonise the depopulated districts.⁸¹ And many went forth at their invitation. In the swampy plains near the mouth of the Elbe, and along its banks, the emigrants chose to make their home. Hardship and difficulty beset their way, but these were not new to them, and they bore up against them with stout hearts and inflexible determination. The soil was poor and cold, but they had been trained to turn *marsch* into *garten*,—the sterility of neglected nature into the verdure of cultivation. Old Elbe, whose tide had rolled in sullen waste from age to age grew cheerful with the stir of human life, and

Colonisa-
tion in
Germany.

⁸¹ The emigration to the Elbe is generally ascribed to the year 1151.

CHAP. IX. proudly smiled as the winged messengers of industry daily more and more numerous traversed its bosom. The pirates of the North came again, but were beaten off: the colonists knew that a bog near a river and the sea was worth fighting for; and they fought for it in such fashion that after a little time the Sclavi returned no more.⁸²

Hamburgh. And their reward was with them. Spreading cautiously but steadily around, they grew into a great and opulent community. Villages arose, widened into towns, and throve into cities. Churches were built, first of wood, afterwards of stone "for fear of fire, and to the greater glory of God;" stadt-hauses also, wharfs, and walls. Then, for considerations timely proffered to their territorial lords, sundry exemptions and immunities from feudal service were obtained. Prudently they sought to make unto themselves friends amongst their needy and dangerous neighbours. Hamborch
7 May, 1189. got its first charter from the Emperor Frederic through the intervention of the Earl on whose domain it stood. Amongst other notable things contained in it, was the right to bring all manner of merchandise into the Elbe free of toll, save certain dues to the imperial exchequer payable at Städe. The right of fishing two miles above, and as far below, their city, was conceded them, and, what was more important to their peace and well-being, a power of preventing any one from

⁸² Davies, Vol. I. p. 46.

erecting a fort or castle within two miles of the gates.⁸³ CHAP.
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The penury of the nobles was every where beginning to be felt, and the means they took to raise money by setting up tolls at the boundaries of every estate, while hindering the spread of traffic and the accumulation of wealth, brought them but precarious and scanty revenues. The tales of their violence and plunder during the thirteenth and fourteenth century,—how they issued from strongholds to beset travellers, or employed armed bands to extort from the defenceless inhabitants of the plain, cattle, money, or provisions,—have been often told. To the growing cities the eyes of industry turned as to the only places of refuge from corrupt and anarchical feudalism. And there distrust lessened not with danger. No occasion of purchasing additional privileges or immunities—the true fortifications of a free and industrious community—were neglected. Their hereditary lord having sold his rights over Hamburgh to the Count of Orlamund for 700 marks, the latter gladly accepted the offer of the city to redeem them at 1500.⁸⁴ From that day a new life seemed to open to them; their capacities with their aspirations expanded; and in the brilliant course of enterprise and honour they have since run, it is not perhaps too much to say that the moral impetus thus imparted is still unspent.

⁸³ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 348.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 386.

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Other cities, emulous of like freedom and security, had also grown up in Lower Germany, — Bremen, Francfort, Lubeck, and the rest. The idea of an association for common defence could hardly fail of suggesting itself to the aspiring communities of these towns, menaced as they incessantly were by their warlike neighbours, and seeing no assurance of protection for their individual weakness in a time when the authority of the emperors had fallen comparatively into contempt, when law was utterly devoid of force, and when brigandage went unpunished, or claimed the sanction of high-born and honourable examples. With the cities of the Baltic the common object chiefly prized was commerce, which it was equally the interest of all of them to maintain and to extend. At first two or three cities combined and lent each other mutual succour. But their dangers multiplied. During the troubles that ensued upon the deposition of the Emperor Frederic II., the oppressions of the nobles became insupportable, and at least sixteen cities of the Rhine formed themselves into a perpetual league of defence and trade.⁸⁵

The Hanse
towns.

And adhering to the old name whereby their earlier alliances had been called, the expanding confederacy vowed to one another unflinching fidelity under the epithet and symbol of clasped hands. In most of the Slavonic dialects *hanse* is used to denote a society of traders or workmen; and the

⁸⁵ Mallet, De la Ligue Hanseatique, p. 13.

almost identical word *hand* appears to have been as long made use of in the signification familiar to English ears. It has been conjectured by some that the connexion of the separate fingers in a single outspread hand suggested originally the application of the term to an association of municipal communities. But the etymology is more picturesque than true.

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A writer of the eighteenth century, with the memory of the *Hanse* League predominantly in his mind, not unnaturally seeks a direct derivation for its title in a word of simple and primary signification, forgetful that the great confederacy, which eventually became so permanent and illustrious, was not the first of its kind among the Northern nations ; that several experimental unions are known to have antecedently existed, and that many more may be supposed to have been attempted without success :⁸⁶ that these must have had a name significant in some degree of their object ; and that when a union of more numerous and widely scattered elements was about to be formed, it was natural that it should take for its designation a term familiarly known and understood by all its constituent communities. Among all of these we may easily imagine that a society of traders of a particular craft suggested innumerable associations of intimate connexion and mutual hold. Without venturing to apply the words guild or corporation to such bodies, we

Derivation
of the name.

⁸⁶ Mallet, p. 14.

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may safely believe that fellow-workers, whether of the loom or the stithy, in each town had certain ties of industrial origin amongst themselves, and that those engaged in less local avocations were likewise united by certain bonds of trade. In this restricted sense the term *hanse* has immemorially been used by the Germans. Its transference from individuals of the same calling to towns of the same kind is sufficiently obvious and intelligible, and suggests almost inevitably the paraphrase—a trading-towns union.

Mercantile
intercourse.

Owing to the absolute want of all those facilities of intercommunication with which we are familiar, the merchants of the middle ages were of necessity obliged to conduct nearly all their important transactions in person. When the capitalist of Venice or Genoa had freighted a vessel with the produce of the Levant and the manufactures of Italy, intending them for the markets of the North, he either sailed in the same ship with his costly venture, or committed it to the care of some member of his family or confidential agent, who took charge of it, and whose duty it was to bring back (often at a long interval) the price which it had realised. The reciprocal system of the Hanseatic League tended materially to abate the loss of time, and obvious risk of every kind, to which such a course of trade was liable. Their magazines and storehouses were conspicuous in every town embraced in their federative bond; and the tempest-tossed or wayworn trader had a place of security and assistance where-

unto he could resort with confidence, if fortunate enough to belong to one of the confraternal cities. CHAP.
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Among the earliest members of the League was Hamburgh,⁸⁷ which, partly sprung from the Dutch plantation above noticed, was destined to become the chief commercial port within the Sound.

At first the standard of mutual recognition was known only in the ports of the Baltic. But the repute of its benefits spread. Henry III. permitted an *entrepôt* under the regulations of the League to be established in London.⁸⁸ Dort, Haarlem, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, in Holland, —Nimeguen, Zutphen, and Harderwyk, in Guelderland, —Zwolle, Campen, and Deventer, in Overysel,⁸⁹ —entered the confederacy. Then Rouen, Bordeaux, and St. Malo, were too glad to be enrolled among its members. Somewhat later, Barcelona, Cadiz, Leghorn, and Messina, all feeling themselves helpless in the neglect of their war-mad rulers, gladly accepted the powerful hand of alliance. Its bond was the brotherhood of industry, instituted for the purpose of reciprocal aid and interchange of goods; and wherever its factories were planted there commerce throve. And thus, if “their beginnings were feeble, their progress was rapid, and their success astounding. The circumstances of the time had favoured their combination, and they turned them to account with great ability.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Mallet, p. 28.

⁸⁸ Beawes, *Lex Mercatoria*, p. 9.

⁸⁹ *La Richesse de la Hollande*, Tom. I. p. 36.

⁹⁰ Sartorius, in Mallet, p. 16.

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IX.
Maritime
code.

A.D. 1172.

A.D. 1266.

Gradually a maritime code won recognition, whose fundamental principles were derived, through the civil law, from that of ancient Rhodes, and which the resumed activity of commerce summoned from their Roman embalmment. Henry II. of England and Pope Alexander III. had already evoked the humanising spirit of that ancient code regarding wrecks.⁹¹ The men of Barcelona had recalled to practical purpose many more of its provisions; and, finally, under the somewhat unaccountable title of the Laws of Oleron,⁹² the best portion of Greek commercial legislation was restored. Said not the great historian well, that “a truth is everlasting?” These laws of Rhodes, Rome, Barcelona, Oleron, modified rather in words than substance, form, even to the present hour, the basis of nearly every maritime code in Europe. Apart from such considerations however, to have become acknowledged and obeyed, in times like those in question, was a truly inestimable good and guerdon of progress towards civilisation. Happily for the interests of society at large, the feudal governments had not leisure to inquire into the exact meaning of what their neglected citizens were doing to protect themselves from piracy and violence of every description. In later days of exhaustion, princely jealousy was turned upon the power and influence of the League, and one after another the

⁹¹ Madox, ch. 10, § 8, p. 235.

⁹² Macpherson, Vol. I. pp. 343, 358.

delinquent cities of Spain, France, and England, compelled to withdraw from it. The confederacy was once more limited to the Baltic towns; and to-day little remains of it but its imperishable fame. But in the great struggle of society during the middle ages it played a brave and beneficent part. It was the international guard of Europe, often arbitrary towards individuals, and not always free from ambitious aims and misapplications of its power; but, in the main, an organisation of labour in its own behoof, unhelped by royalty, or chivalry, or the glittering monopolists of renown, of whom giddy history has such a world of unimportant tales to tell, that for the most part she has left us without materials for any thing like an adequate chronicle of the united Hanse towns.

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Commercially the influence of the Hanseatic League was every where perceptible throughout the maritime states of Europe during the fourteenth century. But in most of them its system was unadapted for permanency; and soon or late it must have met with a peremptory repulse. To the Dutch it spoke a language of peculiar significance. Before the eyes of this thoughtful and adaptive people it held up a scheme of polity curiously similar to that which already they had begun to build up, and of materials identical, in part, with those they had to mould and fashion. The compatibility of infinitely diverse elements in compact and harmonious union,—the vitality of localism with the strength of empire,—the invaluable truth that external identity may consist without an attempt at

Incapable
of permanency.

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IX.

internal fusion,—these were great ideas, rather the openings to exhaustless mines of political thought, for which it is hard to believe that the Dutch were indebted to the Hanse League. But their connexion with it was to them a moral as well as mercantile apprenticeship. Its practice strengthened all that was sound of previous impressions and eradicated many errors. They learned experimentally, that the self-dependence which, as individuals and municipal communities, they had been accustomed to regard as the one thing needful to success and security, was capable of being applied in a still more extended sphere, and was adequate to the highest wants. They beheld in the League the value of mutual confidence and reciprocal duties; and, in its gradual dissolution, the folly of affecting to combine too remote objects, and of disregarding the incompatibilities of character and circumstance. To say that their own scheme of rule, when they came to form it, was in many respects unlike, and in all respects wiser and better, is but to say that they were pupils on whom teaching was not lost, and that they were equally capable of appreciating great principles, and avoiding the mistakes of their early and in some degree experimental misapplication. What else have any truly great or wise nation ever done? How far the Dutch were popularly conscious of the suggestive influence of the Hanse League is a question more curious than important.

Inherent
weakness of
the League.

The inherent weakness of the League lay in its want of nationality. It comprehended too much

and too little ; too many of a particular section of
several communities, and too few of the various
classes of each. It was throughout a concatenation
of towns—strong, maniplied, and extensive ; but
chains will not grow. There was in it no principle
of growth, of progress, of self-sustenant life. It
could, as a common means of defence, be extended,
added to, prolonged ; but the powers of expansion
and inclusion, which alone enable any system to
embrace within its sympathies all those interests
and classes with which its members are indissolubly
mixed up in daily life—these were absolutely want-
ing, and with them were wanting the great elements
of durability. Many Dutch cities might belong to
it with profit ; still it was not and could never
become Dutch. In proportion as the prestige of its
name and power was felt to be efficient in their de-
fence and protection, so was their allegiance to their
country lessened, their sense of gratitude, depend-
ence, and attachment to their own nation weakened.
To say, that in default of native care and defence
they were justifiable—nay wise in availing themselves
as a substitute of the Hanse confederacy, is in no
way inconsistent with the ascription to the nature
of the substitute of grave defects—defects which, had
the League been more permanent, would have de-
veloped themselves more palpably, but which, even
while it lasted, betrayed quite sufficiently their in-
herent tendency to produce national disorganisation.
Districts, provinces, kingdoms, may unite, safely
and beneficially, when the desire for union is mu-

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tual, and the circumstances and characters of the respective parties are suitable and propitious. But no similarity of avocation, no identity of merely industrial interest, no community of sentiment or feeling, can permanently enable a given number of cities in one country to unite themselves in the paramount obligations of public polity with a corresponding number of another country. Soon or late the attempt must lead to the abnegation of those most intimate, most natural, and, in the main, most inviolable ties of kindred, locality, birth, neighbourhood, and recollection. The agricultural population which surround the manufacturing or trading cities of a land are the nearest friends and best companions in industry which they can have. Reciprocally they can do each other an amount of good, both economically and morally, which neither can render any other community elsewhere. When the interfluent course of their custom and their fellowship is interrupted, a thousand opportunities of good offices go to waste, and infinite means of mutual enrichment are destroyed.

Wisselen.

A fact very significant of the growth of international trade is the increased number of money-brokers, or, as they began to be termed, *banquiers*.

A.D. 1189.

So early as the fundamental charter of Hamburgh, we find special provision made for the carrying on of their business. The right to license those who followed this profession was then (and for long afterwards) reserved as a special prerogative of feudal suzerainty; and when its gains increased, the

licenses were turned to account as a minor, but not unimportant source of revenue. Thus when the seignorial dues of Dort were farmed out for a period of four years to three wealthy citizens at 200 ponden (about 2250 florins) a-year, the wissel, or banque, for the same term was let to the same individuals for 160 ponden, equal to about 1800 florins.⁹³ The jealous vigilance of the local authorities is legible in the curious notice issued by the magistrates of Dort on the publication of the license in question: "Let every body understand that those who confide their money to the banquieres (*wisselen*) do so at their own risk, for the city will not hold itself responsible."⁹⁴ There is no reason to suppose that this intimation was aimed at the credit of the individuals in question; for the function was uniformly intrusted to persons of some note for their wealth or probity; and so honourable was the trust esteemed, that we read of a burgo-master of Amsterdam, who was the sole changer of monies, or banker, in that city at a very prosperous period. The notice is rather to be looked upon as a species of constitutional protest on the part of the municipality against certain infringements on their immunities by the Count, who, in farming the right of banking for a given term, omitted possibly to consult the jealous authorities of the town, regarding a matter on which they were peculiarly well qualified to form a correct judgment, and more than ordinarily concerned in the selection.

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IX.
A.D. 1322.

A.D. 1417.

⁹³ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. II. p. 17.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 21.

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IX.Bankers.
A.D. 1171.

Banking, in our sense of the term, was in reality a different matter, of which the earliest authentic trace, perhaps, is to be found in the *camera degl' imprestiti*, or the chamber of forced loans, at Venice, where the exigency of war having induced the government to levy a compulsory aid from the wealthier citizens, four per cent was given them for the use of their money, and a special department organised for this novel branch of the financial administration.⁹⁵ From this beginning sprung the celebrated Bank of Venice ; but it was not until more than a century later that the first establishment, combining the advantages of exchange and deposit, was instituted at Barcelona.⁹⁶

A.D. 1401.

Bills of ex-
change.
1251.

For the benefits arising from the use of the yet more universally applicable invention the Dutch believed themselves indebted to the Hanse League.⁹⁷ The precise origin of bills of exchange is differently assigned, both as to place and time. At Florence, we are told that, about the middle of the thirteenth century, capital, which had been rapidly accumulating during several generations of great industry and prosperity, began to seek for other investments than those of ordinary trade. Its profits were doubtless encroached upon considerably by the increasing competition of newer towns on every side ; and many of the rich Florentines, finding it daily more difficult and less remunerative to employ their large resources in traffic, “ turned to the greater

⁹⁵ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 341.⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 612.⁹⁷ Recherches sur le Commerce,
Tom. II. p. 24.

trade of dealing in money"⁹⁸ alone. Through the medium of bills of exchange, they soon contrived to participate in effect in the gains of all their neighbours, to whom the pecuniary facilities thus afforded great and manifold advantages; and by the intercourse established through the Hanse League, the knowledge of the system was communicated to the northern communities, which came into use early in the fifteenth century. How can we estimate the value of an invention like this, or realise practically the difference it would have made to Holland had it been delayed two centuries later? Not only was it an instrument of illimitable power and adaptability, of which antiquity knew nothing, placed without cost in the hands of enterprise on the very eve of the greatest opening ever known to the world for its exertion, but the inestimable talisman was conferred sufficiently long before the actual epoch in question to enable the future candidate for industrial pre-eminence to become trained to its subtle and perilous use. Still greater was the value of the timely acquisition to the Dutch in a moral and national point of view. It contributed materially to teach them as a people the elements of that industrial logic which from individual honour deduces the great inference of public faith, and conversely convinces every man that the entertainment of national credit is the best and surest pledge of private security. The days were coming, though as yet their dawn was not seen,

⁹⁸ Muratori, *Antiq.* Vol. I. diss. 16.

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when this conviction, pre-established in the heads and hearts of the mass of the Dutch people, made all the difference in their subsequent destiny, whether they were to be impoverished tributaries or an opulent and independent nation.

Feudalism.

The insane love of war, which the neighbourhood of several distinct and petty potentates was of itself too well suited to keep alive, could no longer be gratified on the easy terms it formerly had been. With the permanent occupancy of land for agriculture, the growth of towns, the spread of the arts of industry, and the uprise of a number of peaceful interests, war became more destructive to the weak and most costly to the powerful. A campaign in the thirteenth and fourteenth century was no longer an affair of a few days' foray in a neighbour's lands, or of bandit surprise and capture of his person. War was beginning to partake of the pecuniary tendency of the time. If the fopperies of chivalry had not yet come, and the soldiery were still compelled generally to fight without pay, still their greater numbers, costlier arms, dearer food, and the more tedious mode of warfare they were obliged to be trained to, all contributed to render the glories of battle much less cheap enjoyments than they were.

Condition of
the rural po-
pulation.

The occupants of the soil frequently suffered, doubtless, from the cupidity and rigour of their lords. Every where around them, in France, in Germany, and in England, the first infusion of mercantile and pecuniary ideas into the relations of feudalism, was painfully and perniciously felt.

The reciprocity of duties and obligations gradually sunk into the habit of bargaining for so much money as an equivalent for their performance; and the mutuality of benefits arising from the true independence which the mercantile system in its full developement affords, was yet to come. All the evils of both were mingled together; and the humble and devoted adherent felt himself daily more and more despised as the weak and impoverished vassal. Every where the same evils of a transition state were keenly felt. In England a law was made forbidding the bailiwicks of the king, or the lands of the great lords to be let to farm at over great sums whereby the people were overcharged.⁹⁹ And in the Netherlands the condition of the agricultural community is described as "having been very wretched, history being filled with disquiet, violence, and detestable deeds."¹⁰⁰

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IX.

A.D. 1300.

Intercourse with the East had begotten a taste for luxury and show among all ranks of the feudal aristocracy, which the increasing enterprise and ingenuity of the trading classes strove to minister to and profit by. But between the expense of ostentatious dress and furniture, and the cost of maintaining armed retinues, the shallow purses of the thriftless barons were seldom full; and, as "they had no other means of increasing their resources than the uncertain expedient of military plunder, they were frequently reduced to solicit

Habits of
expense.⁹⁹ 28 Edward I. chap. 14.¹⁰⁰ De Witt, Part I. chap. 1.

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loans from the rich and industrious burghers, and were accordingly at once dependent upon and jealous of them. They alternately cringed to and plundered the wealthy traders. The commons, on the other hand, sustaining alone the pecuniary burdens of the state, envied the privileges enjoyed by the nobles, whom they detested for their tyranny, rapacity, and debauchery, and despised for their indolence and vanity; and beginning now pretty generally to assert and use the right of taking up arms in their own defence, they sought to repel violence by violence, and to repay aggression with aggression.”¹⁰¹ Such were the elements of social conflict on which incidental circumstances stamped the names and forms of political party.

Origin of
parties.

On the death of William IV. without issue in 1345, his sister, married to the Emperor Louis, became Countess of Zealand, Holland, Friezland, and Hainault. But her husband dying soon afterwards, many of the noblesse, whom she had offended by the attempt to restrain their excesses, instigated her son to assume the sovereignty. In the sanguinary struggle which ensued, the people generally adhered to the cause of Margaret. Her rule, so far as they had experienced it, bid fair to merit their attachment. She had promised at her inauguration not only to observe all their established privileges, but never to make war beyond the frontiers without the consent of the “good towns,”

¹⁰¹ Davies, Vol. I. note F. p. 617.

as well as of the other estates, previously obtained :¹⁰² and the peaceable classes of the community, to whom the benefits of industry were become more palpable and attainable, looked forward to the necessities of a female reign as likely to afford them opportunities to win further immunities, as the condition of their support against the turbulent nobles.¹⁰³ Did not these live, like the *great fish*, by devouring the smaller ones? And how could they be checked but by the *hooks* which, though insignificant in appearance, when aptly used would be too strong for them? Such was the talk of the people; and from these household words arose the memorable epithets, which in after years were heard in every civic brawl, and above the din and death-cry of many a battle-field.¹⁰⁴

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IX.

Certain of the nobles adhered to the cause of the Hooks, while some of the cities, among which were Delft, Haarlem, Dort, and Rotterdam, supported the Kabeljauws.¹⁰⁵ The community was divided into parties rather than into classes, a division less dangerous to the permanent being of the state, though often more difficult to appease by concession, and swayed not unfrequently by meaner motives. In the exasperation of mutual injury, the primary cause of quarrel was soon forgotten. The Hooks were proud of the accession of a lord to

Hooks and
Kabeljauws

¹⁰² Davies, Vol. I. p. 165.

¹⁰³ Ibid. note F. p. 616.

¹⁰⁴ Barante, Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne, Tom. V. p. 231.

¹⁰⁵ "C'est à dire, les Hameçons et les Morues."—Barante, *ibid.*

CHAP. IX. their ranks; and the Kabeljauws were equally glad of the valuable aid which a wealthy and populous town was able to afford. The majority of the cities,—perhaps the majority of the inhabitants in all of them,—favoured the Hook party, as the preponderance of the landowners lay in the opposite scale. But no adherence to antagonist principles, or even a systematic profession of them, is traceable throughout the varying struggle. The shout of the populace was sometimes raised for the Kabeljauws, and in the localities where their rivals predominated the municipal offices were frequently bestowed upon the nobles of the Hook party. In Friezland the two factions were designated by the recriminative epithets of *Vet-koopers* and *Schieringers*,¹⁰⁶—terms hardly translatable.

Civil war,
A.D. 1351.

In the conflict which first marshalled the two parties in hostile array, the Hooks were utterly defeated;—their leaders who survived were banished, their property confiscated, and their dwellings razed to the ground. Margaret was forced to take refuge in England, where she remained until a short time previous to her death in 1354, when the four provinces acknowledged William V. as their undisputed lord. The succeeding reigns are chiefly characterised by the incessant struggles of the embittered factions, beneath the alternate sway of whose selfish and reckless chiefs the governments of Albert, William VI., and Jacoba, were

¹⁰⁶ Davies, Vol. I. p. 180.

impoverished and enfeebled. The towns, though often rent by fierce contentions, nevertheless contrived to cement their local authority, and in many instances to extend their immunities and liberties. If agriculture was retarded by the continual recurrence of civil war, commerce, which was less exposed to its scourge, steadily advanced. The necessities of the Counts had led to the introduction of the system of loans which the towns seldom furnished without exacting some addition or confirmation of their privileges.¹⁰⁷ CHAP.
IX.

Whatever progress was made during the latter half of the fourteenth century was municipal and commercial. In a national view the government was helpless and inefficient, entangled by ambitious family alliances with France, England, and Germany, and distracted by the rival powers and pretensions of domestic factions. Under the administration of the ill-fated Jacoba these evils reached their full maturity. Her history bears strong features of resemblance to that of Mary Queen of Scots; and with each the separate sovereignty of their country ceased, although by the intervention of different means.¹⁰⁸ Jacoba.

¹⁰⁷ Davies, Vol. I. p. 164.

¹⁰⁸ For a genealogical series of

the sovereigns of Holland, see Appendix.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOUSE OF BURGUNDY.

“A good government is not that where the well or ill-being of the subjects depends on the virtues or vices of the rulers, but where the well or ill-being of the rulers depends on that of the subjects. And, as the flourishing of manufactures, fisheries, navigation, and trade, whereby Holland subsists, will infallibly produce great, populous, strong, and wealthy cities, we ought to consider that God can give no greater temporal blessing to a country in our condition than a free government; for where there is liberty there will be riches and people.”¹

CHAP.
X.
—
THE
DUTCH.

ON the deposition of the Countess Jacoba in 1426, the government of Holland, Zealand, and Friezland, devolved on Philip I. duke of Burgundy. Flanders and Artois already formed parts of his splendid heritage; and he subsequently acquired by descent, purchase, or the sword, Antwerp, Limberg, and Brabant, Mechlin and Namur. Thus the greater number of both the Dutch and Belgian Netherlands became united under one feudal lord,—the equal of many of the sovereigns around him, and the superior of most of them in the wealth and defensive strength of his dominions. The titular

¹ De Witt, True Interest of Holland, Part I. chap. 1.

suzerainty of the Emperor was treated with contemptuous disregard.² The monarchs of France and England recognised Philip as their peer : he kept a magnificent and hospitable court, and was in all save the epithet a king. But he was more ; he was a man able to bear rule ; and posterity remembers him by a nobler title, for among his contemporaries he was called “ the Good.” Proud of the noble realms that owned his sway, he understood whence their greatness sprung, and had the wisdom to appreciate and respect it. Arbitrary prerogatives and military ambition led him into wasteful expense, and in some instances to infractions of local privilege. But the general tenour of his administration was protective of industry, not by factitious aids or limitations, but by encouraging its natural tendency to expansion.

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X.

One of his first acts on assuming the administration of the Dutch provinces was to send ambassadors to the King of the Scots to negotiate a commercial treaty, and express how fully he was aware of “ the agreeable consequences ” of the Scotch merchants coming to the ports of Zealand and Holland for the sale of their merchandise ; and how, being anxious “ to promote peace and industry at

Commercial
treaty with
Scotland.

² Barante, Hist. Bourg. Tom. VI. p. 176 :—“ Le duc de Bourgogne, vassal et sujet de nous et du saint empire, méprise notre majesté impériale et l'empire auquel il doit cependant soumission, au point de ne pas vouloir reconnaître ce qu'il tient de nous et

de l'empire. Le daignant tous les égards dus à son souverain il a usurpe ces domaines et s'y maintient indument,” &c.—Letter of the Emperor Sigismund to the Duke of Savoy, in 1434; Barante, Tom. VI. p. 253.

CHAP. X. the earnest desire of the town of Middleberg, he had confirmed and established, for a period of four years, to the merchants of Scotland, all the liberties, rights, and privileges formerly enjoyed (by them), that they might possess the same through the whole countries of Holland, Zealand, and Friezland, on paying the ordinary duties and customs."³ Encouraged by such guarantees, the ancient intercourse revived; but, some complaints having arisen among the traders, in order to compose disputes, it was deemed advisable in the following year, to promulgate a more explicit and formal definition of the relations which subsisted between the countries, and from its provisions we are able to get more insight than from any previous document into the nature and extent of the traffic then carried on.

12th February,
1426.

Freedom of
trade.

This singular and instructive document appears to have been given in the form of letters-patent, by Philip of Burgundy at Leyden,⁴ in Holland, and bears date the 6th December, 1427. It begins by recounting the embassies interchanged with a view to settle terms with the Scots, and then proceeds to

³ Groot Charter Boek, IV. 816, in Yair, p. 65.

⁴ "Leyde a dû pendant longtemps ses richesses aux manufactures de laine. Celle de ses draps a été très anciennement renommée. On ne peut en douter à la lecture de l'espèce de traité, par lequel Jean de Bavière se rendit maître de Leyde en 1420. Le traité porte entre autres choses, que les peaux de laine Angloises seront bonifiés aux propriétaires, et que les draps qui si faisoient à

Leyde ne seront plus marqués de la marque du *Burg-graaf*, mais de celle de la ville. Cela suppose que cette fabrique étoit fort ancienne à Leyde; il falloit qu'elle le fût, puisqu'on la trouve déjà soumise à une inspection de police qu'on avoit jugée nécessaire pour en soutenir la réputation, et qu'elle eut déjà acquis un grand crédit chez l'étranger, puisqu'on exigea la marque de la ville."—La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 41.

enumerate those which have been “agreed upon for the common benefit of both parties, and for mutual harmony.” To end disputes, it provides that all individual claims of damage suffered during war be settled by the governments respectively of the parties injured, all letters of marque being mutually cancelled; “further promising that no new letters of this kind should be given against the subjects (of each other) for a hundred years and one day.” Careful, but liberal, provisions are made for the case of vessels forced, by stress of weather, or by the pursuit of an enemy’s ship, to put into a port to which she was not bound; also to meet the contingency of a vessel “loaded with perishing goods belonging to any of the merchants of Scotland—such as corn, onions, apples, or the like—for want of a favourable wind, detained too long for the merchant’s interest;” in which case the Scots were to be allowed to “bring these goods to their own staple (or mart) and sell them to the best advantage, always paying the tolls and observing the usual customs,” which all other persons were legally obliged to observe and pay. Certain port charges are reduced to specified rates; nine mites only being payable on every ton: six mites being equal to a duyts, and eight duyts to a stiver. Then come the regulations concerning foreign fabrics. “The Scotch merchants may import, in bales, their white cloths of the statute length and breadth to any part (of the provinces), and there have them dyed, and may carry back the said cloths to their own country

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X.

without any let or hindrance, only they shall not sell, alienate, or in any manner of way, make merchandise of the foresaid cloths upon the penalties appointed as proper against contraveners, always allowing the Scotch merchants to bring their cloths of a due breadth into our country (for open sale), according to the privileges already granted," &c.⁵

Dyed and
undyed
cloths.

It is obvious, from the due interpretation of the latter clause, that the apparently restrictive one that immediately precedes it, was in fact intended, and no doubt was used, as a valuable boon. The Scotch could spin and weave probably as well as the Dutch, but dyeing was an art less generally understood, and one in which early proficiency had been attained in the Netherlands. It was a great concession, therefore, to permit foreigners to bring in their cloths duty free for the purpose of being dyed and re-exported ; and it would have been simply an inducement to smuggling if such goods had been allowed to pass into consumption in competition with the native fabrics, upon the sale of which, in the regular way, a certain toll or duty was paid. If foreigners could undersell the Dutch fairly in finished and saleable goods, they were at liberty to do so ; but they should bring them into the country in the lawful way, and not as "contraveners."

The Golden
Fleece.

January
1430.

It was on the occasion of his marriage that Philip, desirous of instituting a national order of knighthood, chose for its insignia a "golden fleece,"

⁵ Campvere MS. in Yair, pp. 75-79.

with the motto, "Pretium non vile laborum,"—not to be contemned is the reward of labour.⁶ The Norwegians, in their gratitude and admiration of the magnet, had made it the symbol of an order of knighthood, to which their most honoured men alone were suffered to belong;⁷ and the selection of such an emblem as the fleece, even had there been no legend annexed, is an unmistakeable waymark of the progress which society was already making. Industry, so long the unwaged serf of feudalism, had worked its way across the threshold, to be flung out disdainfully no more. Creeping stealthily towards the hearth of power, it had won favour by the skill and rarities it had to shew, and in a whim of good-will it was permitted a seat in the corner "during pleasure." Once seated, its whiling tongue, whose accents smote upon the greedy ear of ignorance and force, brought them to listen and learn, until they loved to listen and learned to love. Industry was a domestic now, part of the household—a constant, an indispensable item in the sum of national being, but an oft-spurned domestic still—dependent, on suffrance, without recognition. But while feudalism fought and bled, and wore itself down in never-ceasing strife, industry kept house, grew rich, grew strong—and was found, by fainting chivalry, an all-restoring aid and stay in its defeated hours. The tolerated serf—the domestic during pleasure—was become an inestimable friend.

CHAP.
X.Probably
about the
year 1270.⁶ Davies, Vol. I. p. 220.⁷ Macpherson, Vol. I. p. 365.

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X.

“Not to be contemned,” thought meditative feudalism, “is the reward of labour.” It is the gift of genius to utter the general thought heretofore unuttered—it is that especially that men call eloquence—it is that which, if a man hath, the multitude will follow, for they feel that he can do for them what they cannot do for themselves, deliver them of the thought that is big within them. And it was this that, instinctively and unconsciously, Philip was doing when he announced the institution of the order of the Golden Fleece. It was to be national,—of the Netherlands: what should its idea be? What but industrial? For the first time labour was given heraldic honours. The pride of the country had become laden with industrial recollections, its hope full of industrial triumphs; if feudalism would keep its hold, it must adopt or affect the national feeling. No longer despised was the recompense of toil; upon the honour of knighthood it should so be sworn; nay, knighthood would henceforth wear appended to its collar of gold no other emblem than its earliest and most valued object—a golden fleece!*

Relations
with Eng-
land.

To ingratiate himself with his new subjects, especially those of Zealand, Philip had renewed in 1428 the terms of commercial friendship with England. A few years afterwards political events tended to his estrangement from that alliance and to his closer adhesion to France. Having hitherto

* Davies, Vol. I. p. 220.

abetted the invasion of that kingdom by the Plantagenets, he now changed his course of policy and negotiated a separate peace with the French king. By the English he was accused of duplicity in the transaction, and so violent was the feeling against him that a general pillage of the Holland and Zealand merchants, resident in England, took place, and several of them were seized by the populace and murdered. Yet both countries were averse to war. A strong interest was felt in the maintenance of a good understanding, and it was eventually owing to an over-confidence in the power of this sentiment in the Netherlands that an actual rupture was rendered unavoidable. The English government attempted secretly to persuade certain of the Dutch towns to promise that, in case of war, they would refuse to take any part. But the burghers of Zealand and Holland were not to be misled. They deprecated the prospect of hostilities which must interrupt their trade, but they hesitated not to send the English letters to the Duke of Burgundy,⁹ and met his appeal to them on the eve of the war with cheerful "aid and popular approbation."¹⁰ After one campaign, however, the zeal of the provinces cooled. In accordance with the manifest feeling, peace and commerce were restored, and continued without further interruption for many years. Middle-berg being still the staple port of the English,

CHAP.
X.

A.D. 1435.

A.D. 1437.

⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 223.¹⁰ Barante, Tom. VI. p. 336.

CHAP. X. trade flourished more than ever.¹¹ The import of raw wool was entirely relieved from the payment of even the ordinary customs,—a measure which, while it proves the importance attached to this branch of trade, shews likewise that the Dutch continued to receive from their rulers the protection they required.¹² And this was then their notion of protection,—to be allowed to buy what they liked where they liked, to live at peace with their neighbours, and to be let alone.

Dutch ideas
respecting
reciprocity.

Four hundred years have passed and gone since the Netherlands persuaded their rulers to take off *all* duty on raw wool, and to permit half-finished cloths to be brought into their country in order that they might be dyed and taken out again *duty free*; yet we live in the midst of tariffs whose aim it is to hinder the importation of the raw material by prohibitory duties and to prevent competition in every kind of fabric by so-called protecting ones! And in England, also, at the period in question, the suicidal spirit of commercial envy had seized hold of the government, and in every parliament some fresh evidence was afforded of the jealousy with which foreign skill and competition were viewed.¹³ But the Dutch held on the tenour of their discerning and sagacious way without waiting for reciprocity or resenting its reverse. If the English would not

¹¹ Yair, p. 89.

¹³ Parliamentary History, Vol.

¹² La Richesse de la Hollande, I. p. 42.
Tom. I. p. 42.

admit their cloths, that was no reason why they should cheat themselves of the advantage of Eng-
 lish and Irish wool. If not cloths, there was doubtless something else that they would buy from them. Among other articles, there was salt, which they had acquired a peculiar skill in refining; and there was an extensive carrying trade in the produce of the Northern countries, and in various costly luxuries, which the English obtained from remoter regions generally through them.¹⁴

One cannot read the contemporary annals of Holland and Flanders during the reign of Philip the Good and his successors without being struck with the essential difference of temperament between their inhabitants, or without being convinced that to their opposite habits, feelings, and characteristics, must be ascribed the painful contrast in their subsequent fortune. Upon the slightest provocation the exciteable populace of Ghent and Bruges were ready to abandon their ordinary pursuits and raise the standard of revolt. Again and again their wild and incoherent tumults were appeased by the extraordinary forbearance and self-possession of Philip, more than one of whose best officers fell by his side in their sanguinary affrays. But no sooner was he departed than their vows of order and loyalty were forgotten, and their exciteable passions blinded them anew. In the anomalous and inconsistent diversity of their complaints it is impossible to discern the

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X.

Holland and
Belgium.

¹⁴ Rymer, *Fœdera*, Tom. X. pp. 403, 761.

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X.

actual grievances which may have existed, although incapable of sudden remedy, and certain only of aggravation from the destructive course which they adopted. Month after month was passed in turbulence and bloodshed until "all commerce ceased, and no man ventured to cultivate his fields. Armed bands traversed the country, wrecking the houses of the noblesse; sedition had turned the people from habits of industry. Wool (to be manufactured) came no more as usual from England. The *métier à tisser les draps*, which had contributed so much to enrich the city of Ypres, was abandoned by the workmen. The canals were stopped, the rich would not venture to lay out money while the country was thus agitated, and thus less employment was given to the poor. There was soon a greater influx of people at Marykirke than it was good to see."¹⁵

Effects of
disturbance

Tranquillity was at length restored. Bruges was the last to hold out, and sustained a siege of many weeks; but, impoverished by idleness, wasted by disease, and their hardihood fairly broken by the formidable power against which they had frantically flung themselves, the resolution of the multitude gave way, and on bended knees they cried for pardon and the restoration of their trade. Pardon, with some exceptions (few for the time), was granted them; but their once renowned and truly splendid commerce it was not in the power of Philip to restore—not in their own. The canals and roads

¹⁵ Barante, Tom. VI. pp. 436, 438.

were reopened, the tocsin sounded no more, the law was executed as formerly, and on the spot where outrage had been most conspicuous, penitent prayers were offered day by day. But the old enterprise and energy came not to Bruges again. Beyond the Meuse was a safer land, whence, having found refuge and shelter, they would not return.¹⁶

How different a state of things appears to have existed there! About the very same period a scarcity of food occurred in Holland. During a misunderstanding with the Hanse League, the Dutch ships laden with corn were seized on their return from the Baltic, and their crews and cargoes detained. The consequences in Holland were severely felt.¹⁷ Provisions of every description rose for a time to excessive prices, and the privations endured were unavoidably great. It is worthy of note, however, that the circumstance appears to have been one of exceedingly rare occurrence, and that it was only when by some such contingency as the supply from abroad being intercepted at a time when the crops were deficient at home, that popular apprehension was excited or any scarcity arose. The partial failure of the corn-harvest in the Dutch Provinces was an event by no means rare. The difficulties of an ungenial soil and climate not unfrequently baffled the best efforts of the husbandman; and at all periods the produce of the land was probably inadequate to supply the wants of its in-

CHAP.
X.

Scarcity.
A.D. 1437.

¹⁶ Barante, Tom. VI. p. 445, et seqq.

¹⁷ Davies, Vol. I. p. 225.

CHAP. X. habitants.¹⁸ Did agricultural industry, therefore, demand the power of stinting the community at large in their food, or forcing it up to a factitious price for its own peculiar gain? Or did the government refuse to allow individual enterprise to lay in betimes stores of foreign corn, or wait till hunger had become frenzied and importunate, and the gatherings of thrift and toil had been wasted in paying excessive prices for home-grown food before they would suffer supplies from abroad to come in?—Not so. The ports were at all times open to the admission of foreign grain. More or less was thus introduced every year. If not required for consumption in the provinces, it was re-exported elsewhere, and this course of traffic eventually became, as is well known, one of the most important branches of Dutch commerce.¹⁹

Inadequate
importa-
tions.

Although corn is enumerated among the varied articles of import from the Baltic in the fifteenth century,²⁰ we can hardly imagine that as yet commercial intercourse was sufficiently diffused and systematic to draw such supplies to the ports of the Netherlands as subsequently rendered them the greatest *entrepôts* of grain in Europe. And, undoubtedly, there were seasons, like that above noted, when the price of bread rose exorbitantly high, when the multitude looked anxiously for the arrival of the corn-ships from Pomerania and Sweden,

¹⁸ De Witt, Part I. chap. 5.

¹⁹ Batavia Illust. Part I. § 5.

²⁰ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 32.

and when until after their arrival the fears of dearth were with difficulty assuaged. But while the inadequate importations of corn occasionally caused fluctuations in the price, "the periods of scarcity were of much shorter duration than in those countries which depended on their own supplies;"²¹ and how matters could have been rendered worse during such periods, by their freedom to avail themselves of every known or compassable alternative,—or how the pressure of want would have been lightened by the existence of legislative securities against too rapid and abundant relief, in the shape of prohibitions,—it is not very easy to see.

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X.

Had the effect of free commerce been to discourage agriculture at home, or to prevent additional lands being brought into cultivation, there might be some room for question in the matter. But the whole weight of evidence establishes the opposite result.²² The increase of trade was accompanied by a corresponding improvement in agriculture. For the better cultivation of the soil, and for the reclamation of waste grounds, great pains were devoted to the extension and perfection of drainage. Elsewhere drainage may be desirable for the realisation of better crops and higher profits; but in Holland it was literally an indispensable to obtaining any return whatever, or any crop at all. Elsewhere the outlay is a moderate one, and the cost of maintenance trivial. In Holland

Land under
cultivation.

²¹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 255, note.

²² Guicciardini, Tom. II. p. 146.

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X.

the original expenditure requisite was enormous, and the charge for repairs a never-ceasing burden.²³

Nevertheless agriculture flourished ; every summer saw new fields golden with the fruits of self-reliant labour ; prices were seldom very low, but they were still more rarely very high ; the taxes were manifold and weighty, extending even at some periods to provisions, but all taxes were for revenue, and not for protection.

Improve-
ment of the
dykes.

Yet far from shrinking from these truly peculiar liabilities affecting land, the Dutch agriculturists went on continually improving their costly drainage, and applying new expedients and inventions for rendering it more perfect. The coast dykes had hitherto been formed of reeds interwoven with a tough and pliant weed called *wier* ; and against this stoccade earth and sand were then piled. The intrinsic want of weight and solidity, however, in this species of framework, rendered it frequently liable to give way ; and, to obviate this defect, large beams of durable timber were fastened together by massive bolts of iron ; and being continued all along the coast, thus formed the gigantic skeleton of the noblest inanimate guardian, on whose stability and power a free people ever yet relied.²⁴ Ere the middle of the fifteenth century every portion of Utrecht and Holland was thoroughly intersected by canals.²⁵

²³ De Witt, Part I. chap. 3.

²⁴ Davies, Vol. I. p. 253.

²⁵ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 30.

With an expanding trade and improving agricul-
 ture, the demand for labour must have necessarily
 been such as to insure comparative competence to
 the working classes. Habits of thrift and toil
 disposed them to embrace these opportunities; and,
 as the currency of the Provinces was never de-
 preciated as that of other countries frequently had
 been,²⁶ and the free admission of all articles of
 consumption at duties little, if at all, exceeding the
 excise imposed for revenue on those of home pro-
 duction, furnished the Dutch markets with steady
 and abundant supplies,—it seems tolerably certain
 that the necessaries of life seldom exceeded the
 average price which they nominally bore elsewhere.
 And, perhaps, no better definition of national pro-
 sperity can be conceived than this—an adequate
 supply of food and raiment for the many at reason-
 able cost, and a demand for free labour sufficient
 to enable them to buy them.

Taxation was, doubtless, raised considerably
 during Philip's reign. A native writer has even
 alleged that "Philip received more money from his
 subjects than they had paid in four centuries before;
 but," he adds, "they thought little of it, since he
 used no force, nor the words *sic volo sic jubeo*:"²⁷
 and one is willing to forgive the exaggeration of the

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 X.
 Condition
 of the peo-
 ple.

Taxation in
 France and
 Holland.

²⁶ Alterations in the currency
 had always been found perilous
 to the government of the Nether-
 lands.—See account of the great
 insurrection at Ghent in 1432,
 occasioned by changes in the

value of money, Barante, Tom.
 VI. p. 180.

²⁷ Pontus Hueterus, Lib. IV.
 cap. 19; in Davies, Vol. I. p. 253,
 note.

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X.

chronicler's fiscal estimate for sake of the commentary he has appended to it. A more celebrated, but in these matters probably ill-informed annalist, has launched a conjecture equally wide of the mark, when, beholding the comparative ease with which the Netherlanders in general bore their fiscal burdens, he asserts that they were more lightly taxed than any other people of his time.²⁸ But far from slighting the testimony of either Hueterus or Commynes, because of the errors with which each is clouded, we may justly appreciate both as different ores, capable of rendering with due care much that is sound and of value. The French historian, whose ears were weary of the incessant complaints, menaces, and altercations, which misrule and popular distress had caused in his own distracted land, naturally enough mistook the good humour with which the Dutch paid their taxes for a proof of their specific lightness. And he was in fact more than half right in his guess at the reason. Specific lightness is perhaps a phrase without financial meaning. The only measure that can be intelligibly used in estimating the weight of taxation is that which has regard to the actual or comparative ability to bear it. Of this Commynes knew next to nothing. Commerce was still in France but a timorous adventurer. Internal enterprise dared not as yet lay one stone upon another,—to plant, or irrigate, or drain. Law and security were not, and

²⁸ Commynes, Liv. V. ch. 2.

where then should industry be? Save the fluctuating produce of the untilled fields, there was hardly anything to tax. Salt being a necessary was made an object of excise, not because it was cheap and could bear it, but because the treasury was empty, and the wretched people hardly ventured to consume any thing else that the famished grasp of exaction could lay hold upon. Hence the undying hatred of the *Gabelle*, and the innumerable struggles to get rid of it. Great in amount it never was: nevertheless it was truly intolerable, as any other impost would equally have been. CHAP.
X.

But the Dutch had for generations been used to varied and great impositions. With the uprise of their trade their taxes had also risen. Of these it is plain that the greater part were expended at home, on objects of peaceful improvement, and that all of them were laid on by representative vote, and were strictly accounted for. True it is that Duke Philip's wars and taste for display led to unprecedented demands from the Provinces, and that more was exacted during his reign than a wiser economy would have required. But proof of financial oppression there is absolutely none. Pressure of
taxation.

Perhaps the most serious blemish on the character of Philip's administration is that of conferring office too exclusively on the adherents of a particular party.²⁹ At the abdication of Jacoba, the use of reproachful party names, and the singing Parties in
1444.

²⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 226, et seqq.

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X.

of party songs, had been forbidden; and it was hoped that, with the original cause of irritation, mutual ill-will would die away. And had an impartial distribution of local trusts and emoluments followed, the desired results might have been realised. But the Kabeljauws, having supported the cause of the Duke, claimed a monopoly of favour as their recompense, and with but too much success. For some time the defeated Hooks submitted silently. As years rolled by, however, and they beheld themselves practically disfranchised in their native towns, where they frequently outnumbered their rivals, a bitter sense of wrong and hatred gathered strength, and upon many occasions broke forth in personal conflict.

Jealousy of
foreign ap-
pointments.
A.D. 1445.

Complaints grew loud of malversation on the part of those who filled important stations. Godwin Van Wilden, a Fleming, who had been appointed Stadtholder of the province of Holland, was charged with violent and corrupt practices, and others were believed to be equally culpable.³⁰ But, as too often happens, when power has been long engrossed by one particular faction, a thousand minor hardships go unredressed, and a world of practical injustice is wrought with impunity before the accumulated rage and indignation of the misruled obtain a hearing from supreme authority. Remonstrance is rebuked as but the murmur of disaffection; and

A.D. 1446.

just complaint, where as yet no aggravated abuse has

³⁰ Barante, Tom. VII. p. 258.

been legally proved, is stigmatised as the ebullition of party spite and envy. And when, as was here the case, the sovereign dwelt habitually in another country, matters were allowed to grow serious, ere any efficient attempt was made towards a reformation of the system. At Medemblick, Leyden, Middleberg, and Haarlem, discontent rose—and apparently not without reason—to such a height, that Philip deemed his presence necessary, and wisely took up his residence in the discontented provinces, where he remained during the greater portion of two or three years.³¹

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The evil-doers were brought to account and punishment. “The governments of the towns were equally divided between the two factions, and thus the establishment of a just understanding was in a great degree effected. The prohibition of 1428 was renewed against the calling of party names; and the *rederykers*, or rhetoricians, a species of dramatic poets, whose art was much in vogue about this time, particularly in the Netherlands, were forbidden to represent satirical pieces, or to sing comic songs in ridicule of either party. Having thus lessened the incitements to hostilities, Philip took measures to prevent their actual commission, by prohibiting all liveries, or distinguishing marks, except for servants, as well as the wearing of hoods,³²

Suppression
of party em-
blems.

A.D. 1447.

³¹ Barante, Tom VII. pp. 257, 259.

³² Used as party badges in France and Italy as well as the Low Countries.

CHAP. X. the creation of new bodies of schuterye,³³ and the wearing of armour or weapons.”³⁴

The local legislatures.

In this work of pacification, Philip seems to have relied not a little on the assistance of the local legislatures. And his fearless sagacity in summoning together these popular bodies in a season of such excitement, and thus hazarding apparently the chance of violent recrimination and collision, was amply approved by the result, and by the cheerfulness and the liberality wherewith they met his demands for supplies.

What the government asked was seldom refused by the Northern States. When the sums were large, the deputies, as in 1447, made stipulations that certain privileges heretofore in doubt should be confirmed, or that some particular benefit should be conferred upon their locality. But these terms were, in most instances, wisely conceded by the sovereign; and the treasures which he left at his death,—in money not less than 400,000 crowns of gold, and 100,000 marks of silver, with jewels, paintings, and other property valued at 2,000,000 more,³⁵—after a long reign of political and courtly expenditure on a scale hitherto, perhaps, unparalleled—proves how freely his subjects must have furnished his exchequer with supplies.

Public expenditure.

The expenses of government, on the other hand, were not large. While the nobles lived in a style

³³ Armed bands enrolled under the municipal authorities.

³⁴ Davies, Vol. I. pp. 229, 230.

³⁵ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. I. pp. 197–199.

of prodigality which exhausted their means, the spirit of frugality had gathered strength and self-respect among the burgher class, who already felt the political importance to be derived from the possession of wealth ; and whose social position still lay too far beneath that of the aristocracy to lead their vanity into temptation. Economy was therefore less an act of self-denial than at first might be supposed. Their great ambition to be rich, and strong, and free, was directly advanced by its observance. Ordinary luxuries were seldom very dear ; and to have a commodious dwelling, and substantial but unostentatious apparel, and to be able to keep a good table,³⁶ were matters not extremely chargeable. Their aim was accumulation, not display. With this prevalent tone of feeling it is not strange that public salaries should have been kept exceedingly low. The members of the Council of State in Holland received no more than from four to six hundred schilds (or from 20*l.* to 30*l.*) a-year for their services, and the chief magistrate of the province had but four times that sum.³⁷ How far the services required from these functionaries absorbed their entire time, or precluded their attention to ordinary pursuits of business, we know not ; but one can readily imagine how politic was the adherence to economy in the details of administration among a people who were perhaps already beginning to be better able to afford large fiscal contributions

³⁶ Guicciardini, Tom. I. p. 58.

³⁷ Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom. I. pp. 212, 213.

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than they were willing to avow. When few instances of flagrant extravagance could be pointed to, and men did not actually see or know of their occurrence, the belief in their existence was comparatively slow and partial. Philip dwelt chiefly at Brussels or in Burgundy, where, surrounded by a brilliant court, he maintained a more than regal hospitality, and indulged in the gratification of a peculiar taste for magnificent display and varied luxury. But the glitter of his splendid pageants and festivities³⁸ was seen from afar by the people of the frugal provinces. They knew not what his other resources were, or what these prodigalities cost; but they would have been scandalised and discontented, probably, if the salaries of their fellow-citizens appointed to fill ordinary stations of trust amongst themselves had been suddenly raised.

Increase of
public im-
posts.

If the amount paid in public contributions by the Dutch to the Duke of Burgundy was greater than they had formerly paid to the Counts, their means were also greatly augmented by the general prevalence of internal peace under his vigorous but just and humane administration; and they could thus infinitely better afford to minister to his real or imaginary wants. He was unto their trade a mighty wall of defence, where hitherto they had none; and in the warmth of its shelter they were

³⁸ For curious details of the celebrated banquet given in 1454, preparatory to a crusade against the Turks, and which was long

remembered by the epithet of *Vœu de Faisan*, see Barante, Tom. VII. p. 447, et seqq.

too busy and happy to grudge the cost which was said to be requisite for its maintenance. The cost might be excessive,—its masonry might be too elaborately ornate,—probably they had their own misgivings also, lest the vanity of aggrandisement might be extended too far, and seek to embrace too vast a realm ; but by them it was indisputably regarded with gratitude and respect. However unpopular the house of Valois ultimately became, the Dutch were devotedly loyal to Philip the Good.³⁹

It is scarcely conceivable, then, that the pressure of taxation could have been more heavily felt than it previously had been. A people who had made by labour all that they possessed were not to be drained of their hard-earned savings quietly. Even had their representatives been corrupted, of which no hint is let fall by any writer of the time, they had still their municipal assemblies, councils, and guilds, in each of whose halls the tocsin of resistance had many a time rung before, and many a time was to be heard again. They had arms, energy, the traditional feelings, and time-immemorial rights of local freedom ; and when therefore we read of such a people paying augmented taxes without murmuring, we may unhesitatingly infer that their industry was steadily thriving, and that they at least associated its increased prosperity with the strength of the government, and the sound policy whereunto its strength enabled it to give efficacy.

³⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 240.

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X.
Bishopric
of Utrecht.

A.D. 1456.

Utrecht was still a separate state, governed by its sovereign bishop, who was elected by the votes of the chapter, subject to the approval of the Pope. On the vacancy which occurred towards the end of the year 1455, the choice of the canons fell upon Gisbert van Brederode, who had previously been archdeacon of the cathedral, and was held in general esteem amongst the people as well as the clergy. The Duke of Burgundy coveted so rich a prize, rather for its political importance, however, and the influence which a closer union of the provinces which adjoined it might hereafter give, than for any direct or immediate gain.⁴⁰ Finding his urgent solicitation disregarded by the chapter, he appealed to Rome in favour of David, his natural son, on whom eventually the mitre was conferred. A show of resistance was made by some of the Utrecht nobles ; but in Amersfort, Reenen, and elsewhere, the people seem to have acquiesced without hesitation. It would also appear that the cause of the ducal candidate was popular in Friezland and Holland, over which the see of Utrecht exercised metropolitan jurisdiction, and the partisans of the native candidate finding themselves outnumbered, and relying upon the assurances and pledges of Philip, that all their rights and immunities should be strictly observed, assented to the elevation of David of Burgundy. Gisbert resumed his archdeaconry with an annuity of 4000 guilders for life charged upon the revenues of the see ; and

⁴⁰ Barante, Tom. VII. p. 502.

thus the foundation was laid for the permanent union of Utrecht to the other provinces, although its final accomplishment was destined to be deferred yet many years.⁴¹ CHAP.
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The possession of Friezland had likewise been long an object of ambition with the princes of Burgundy, and when opportunities served they did not scruple to turn them to account.⁴² We should err, however, in attributing all their acquisitions to force alone. Military strength and reputation contributed, no doubt, to the prestige in favour of the House of Valois ; but their power of defending those who recognised their sway, was a consideration much more likely to be influential in the Netherlands than any admiration of personal prowess or martial accomplishments. The Provinces were weary of their individual feebleness. Their love of local freedom was not grown less ; but, with the progress of industry amongst themselves, and of feudalism drifting fast to wreck and anarchy around them, they looked instinctively to some centre of authority and power, and the first that offered itself was the dominion of Burgundy. Friezland,
1458.

However varied the contingencies which in different provinces opened the way for annexation, and however worthless or corrupt the instruments employed in some cases for its accomplishment, and the dissatisfaction of particular classes or communities which it called forth, it is certain that a feeling Progress of
annexation.

⁴¹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 240, et seqq.

⁴² Ibid.

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A.D. 1430.

favourable to union under some form existed very generally, and that in many districts the prospect was regarded with sanguine expectations. Numerous and powerful was the party that invited Philip into Holland in 1426 ; and when, upon the failure of direct heirs to the duchy of Brabant, three candidates sprung from different collateral branches of the family offered themselves, and the States assembled to decide between their claims, though each had partisans, the majority did not hesitate to prefer the Duke of Burgundy, “ who, better than any of the rest, was able to foster and defend the inhabitants of the country. He was the most powerful, so it was decided by the grand council at Lille that his was the best title : such was the will of the people of Brabant.”⁴³

Centralised
authority.

An evil-minded prince had in some respects a wider field of mischief, and could occasion more distraction and heart-burning among the community by his violence or caprice, than a Lord of Brabant or Count of Holland in days gone by. Yet in the main this increased power was eventually balanced by an increased, or rather an expanded, popular control. What the old legislative council of each province had been to its local chief, the States-General, or representative convocation from all the provinces, in due time became to the common suzerain.⁴⁴ As against external foes the executive power was immeasurably augmented ; but its domestic authority was not necessarily rendered more for-

⁴³ Barante, Tom. VI. p. 94. .

⁴⁴ See p. 137.

midable, or its exercise practically less compatible with municipal and individual liberty. For all common purposes, both of peace and war, administration and security, the concentration of power was a substantial good. Taxation only by consent was steadily asserted as a fundamental condition of obedience; and every infringement on the principle or neglect of its forms was jealously watched and rebuked by the states. Far from undermining the self-ruling spirit of the towns, we find the successive confirmations of their freedom keep pace with the progress of hereditary concentration of the supreme power. Each city still enjoyed unshorn the ample privileges of local taxation and government which it had wrung from the necessities of its peculiar lord in troublous times.

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With the accession of Charles the Bold the best blessings of good government—peace and security—fled. In wars of retaliation or aggrandisement the restless and ruthless spirit of the new sovereign alone found congenial occupation; and, for the gratification of this propensity, his demands both of men and money were unceasing. Besides a permanent body of cavalry, the first nucleus of a regular standing army in the Netherlands,⁴⁵ and the employment of large bodies of foreign mercenaries, the able-bodied population both of the country and the towns were harassed by perpetual enrolments of

Charles the
Bold, 1467.

⁴⁵ Davies, Vol. I. p. 267.

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troops, under the ancient laws of feudal conscription. Military service in defence of the realm was the original tenure of lands, and the towns had commuted their liability for an obligation to pay a specified amount of militia rate⁴⁶ when called upon. Charles, ever encroaching and assailing, was seldom, in his turn, free from attack from one or more of his jealous and exasperated neighbours. The services of his unfortunate vassals in the field had seldom any long seasons of intermission, while the absorption of their time, the neglect of their ordinary avocations, and the havoc made by the sword among them, rendered the pressure of augmented taxation daily more terrible. Nor was this all. Their fisheries and carrying trade, which in the previous reign had begun to flourish and expand, offered too obviously points of attack to the French whose territories, Duke Charles gloried in laying waste. Many of the Dutch merchant-ships fell a sacrifice every year, their cargoes being confiscated, and their crews carried prisoners to distant ports.⁴⁷

Disturb-
ances at
Hoorn in
1471.

Unused to these intolerable evils, and irritated by fresh impositions, which the provincial legislatures had not yet the firmness to resist, the people in many places absolutely refused payment, and accompanied their refusal with certain acts of violence.⁴⁸ The people of Hoorn and of Zierickzee were foremost in resistance. An excise having been im-

⁴⁶ Ruytergeld.

⁴⁷ Commynes, Liv. III. ch. 9.

⁴⁸ Davies, Vol. I. p. 268.

posed on beer, the working classes rose *en masse*, chased the tax-gatherers from the former town, and compelled the magistrates to forego the attempt at levying the duty. The resentful and imperious spirit of Charles regarded these proceedings as a grievous insult to his authority, and he resolved on vengeance. A strong force was poured into Hoorn, many were arrested, some were put to death, and others banished. Then followed edicts which virtually annulled the most ancient privileges of the town, whereby, on pain of death, the excise was enforced, not on beer only, but on wine, salt, and grain. No attempt at remonstrance appears to have been made. An isolated town in mutiny and terror, what could it do, but cower at the feet of tyranny and wither as it bowed in unavailing penitence? The prosperity of Hoorn from that day steadily declined. "Cloth-weaving, which had hitherto been a flourishing manufacture at Hoorn, fell into decay, owing to the numbers of weavers and fullers who were driven from their homes on this occasion."⁴⁹

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Not less summary was the fate of other towns whose offence was similar. At Zierickzee a tumult had occurred in which one or two lives, unhappily, were lost; but being soon appeased by the local authorities, the leaders of the sedition fled. But, in the eyes of Charles, the whole town was tainted with the guilt of rebellion, and should be made an

Zierickzee.

⁴⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 269.

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example. A garrison of foreign troops was quartered in Zierickzee, and it was compelled to pay a fine of 30,000 guilders.⁵⁰ The effect of these proceedings on the spirit of the other cities, it was easy to perceive. On the multitude, perhaps, the influence of fear was of brief duration ; but among the more reflecting and considerate classes, who had much to lose by unsuccessful resistance, and who dared not realise to themselves the possibility of any other, the bitter and benumbing sense of humiliation came slowly and silently ; they had dreamed of loyalty to a great and protective government ;—they found themselves the subjects of a pitiless and wasteful system of extortion.

Gueldres
annexed,
1473.

A.D. 1474.

Availing himself of a domestic quarrel between the reigning prince of Guelderland and his heir, Charles agreed to purchase the duchy from the former for 92,000 crowns of gold. The old duke died before the pecuniary portion of the bargain was actually completed ; and the rightful heir being detained in prison, the grasping lord of Burgundy entered into possession of his purchase, for which no part of the price was ever paid. A hastily concerted effort at resistance by the indignant people of the province was summarily quelled ; and, by way of demonstrating the benefits of annexation, Guelderland was speedily called upon for a contribution of no less a sum than 13,883 livres tournois, to enable Charles to undertake a new and des-

⁵⁰ Davies, ut supra.

perate expedition against certain cities on the Rhine, over which he affected to assert claims of rule. The other provinces were obliged to furnish their proportionate contingents, not even Zealand being exempted, though recently suffering from the effects of a calamitous inundation; and many of the churches were despoiled of their plate to provide for the wants of the army.⁵¹

The day of retribution however came, and from a quarter as little dreamed of by the fierce and haughty despot as by his trodden people. And if sympathy, even when unavailing, is fraught with hallowed power to cheer failing energy, and to rally discomfited hope, in national as in individual minds, so it is impossible to look unmoved upon the chastisement dealt by a congenial, if not kindred, hand upon oppression in its hour of might, and when its laugh of exultation is still ringing through its silenced land loudly and alone. In race and situation there was little in common between the Netherlanders and the Swiss: and diplomatic ties of help or aid between them there were none. Pent up within their rocky limits, like the Dutch amid their fens, they were the last people from whom these would probably have looked for deliverance, or an avenger. Yet no people in Europe then, perhaps, despite the numerous and obvious points of dissimilitude, bore to them so true and strong a likeness in the nobler and more lasting traits of character. Like them their schooling had been in

⁵¹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 276.

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every vicissitude of adversity. Nature's hand had been hard upon them, but not so hard as man's. They had had to filch their liberties, like their pastures, almost by stealth,—to fight for every inch of ground they held, and every muniment of freedom,—to watch over both when won with sleepless vigilance.⁵² Like the Dutch they thus had learned to rely upon persevering industry alone for whatever of comfort or wealth they hoped to enjoy. Labour and liberty were sacred names—and, still better, they were already realised blessings—among the Swiss. Their home lay in the mountains whence the Rhine sprung,—that of the Hollanders in the marshes where at length it lost its way;—but were they not kindred in spirit, faith, and almost all that has uplifted either above their intermediate neighbours, in the book of historic life?

Charles's
invasion of
Switzer-
land, 1476.

The Swiss had heard from far of Charles the Bold, and no sooner did his arms menace their German neighbours, than with an instinctive policy they sent them timely aid. Baffled in his immediate aim the Duke of Burgundy resolved to punish their presumption, and entered their territory with fire and sword. Appalled by the fury of his attack, the Swiss vainly sought to parley and make terms. Do they tremble, then?—they shall be made an example:—and the work of devastation was resumed. But its course was not long unchecked; at Granson Charles suffered a severe defeat,⁵³ and his

⁵² H. Moll, Vol. II. ch. 15.

⁵³ Commynes, Liv. V. ch. 3.

impetuous eagerness to retrieve his military reputation, led him on to the memorable field of Morat, and there to irretrievable ruin. At the tidings of his overthrow, all whom his ruthless arm had heretofore stricken down rose with one accord against him, and after a brief and bloody struggle to maintain his ill-cemented conquests he fell at the battle of Nanci.⁵⁴

CHAP.
X.

January 5,
1477.

On the death of Charles, Burgundy and the Netherlands devolved to Mary his only child,—then but nineteen.⁵⁵ The dukedom and its possessions were claimed, indeed, by Louis XI., as lapsed fiefs of the crown of France. But whatever ground for such pretensions there may have been in feudal law, the Netherlands were unanimous in preferring the rule of a young and native sovereign to the sinister power of the French king; and the more intelligent and reflecting doubtless anticipated, in the comparative weakness of feminine rule, the opportunities of restoring those privileges which had latterly been too often violated, and of recruiting the exhausted energy and industry of their country. Of strong governments—of central vigour in domestic administration, and of being a terror to their neighbours — they had had more than enough. They longed for more influence in their own concerns — more control over their own affairs. The ability of the old provincial legislatures to

Mary and
Maximi-
lian, 1477.

⁵⁴ Communes, Liv. V. ch. 8.

⁵⁵ Barante, Tom. XI. chap. 1.

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X.

check or to resist, by their isolated and unassociated powers, the headstrong will of the prince, began to be found inadequate. As the executive was centralised, it was become palpably necessary that the national will should somehow be concentrated, if responsibility was to be maintained. The responsibility of a common sovereign to each of his provinces, in matters where each apparently was alone concerned, had proved to amount practically to no responsibility at all.

Legislative
Union.

Not that any desire was entertained of merging these local bodies in one. Such an idea belonged to other and far different times.⁵⁶ The Netherlands clung tenaciously to every element of localism, and no trace exists of their loss of attachment to their state legislatures, which still, in fact, performed most of the important functions for which they were designed. But new and other wants had arisen from the feudal union of many provinces, and power, regal in every thing but the name, had grown up so rapidly as to overshadow the ancient ways of representative control. There needed an expanded and concentrated power to confer with aggrandised authority, to exact its confidence as a right,—to bridle its wantonness with a rein of many small cords firmly knotted into one,—to demand with an aggregate voice a full and patient hearing in a nation's name. Within three months of the

⁵⁶ Batavia Illustrata, Part I. § 3.

accession of Mary, the men of experience and station whom Charles had appointed her guardians advised her to summon together an assembly of States-General. CHAP.
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It was the first time such an assembly had met in the land. To Ghent, where the youthful princess held her court, the nobles of each province and the deputies of each town thronged⁵⁷ anxiously and curiously, but with deep thought and immovable purpose. Thither came the hot Kemmerlander from his free and fruitful plains, and the shipowner of Walcheren who loved the sleepless wave. Haarlem, and Dort, and aspiring Amsterdam, sent their astute and wary advocates; while the more popular spirit of Leyden, and Delft, and Rotterdam, desired, perhaps, less oligarchic forms. But these differences, whatever they may have been, are lost in the distance through which we view them now; and the notable result of the assemblage stands out alone in bold and proud relief against the stormy sky that overhung their land. The First
States-Ge-
neral, 1477.

Making the redress of grievances an indispensable preliminary to votes of contribution, the States declared their willingness to support their youthful sovereign to the utmost of their ability, and freely pledged the national honour in her defence. But they likewise declared that the country was ex- The Great
Charter.

⁵⁷ In the earlier assemblies of the States-General the number of representatives both of the nobility and the towns was very great. In that which met at

Bergen-op-Zoom in 1609, no fewer than eight hundred members of the two orders are said to have taken part.—Batavia Illustrata, Part I. § 3.

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hausted and impoverished by the late wars, and that it ought rather to be relieved than further taxed ; the more so, as that during many recent years “ great encroachments had been made on the liberties and privileges of the provinces and the towns, which they desired to see restored.”⁵⁸ And to this resolution they adhered so inflexibly, that in their first session was obtained that solemn confirmation of ancient rights, and absolute renunciation of arbitrary prerogatives, which ever afterwards was regarded as a fixed and fundamental acknowledgment of the conditions on which popular allegiance rested, and which among the Hollanders was known by the title of the Great Charter.

De non
evocando.

It confirmed in the fullest manner the jurisdiction of the local tribunals, and the right *de non evocando*, as it was termed, whereby every man might claim to be tried, or to have his suit heard, by the courts of his own town, an appeal only being reserved to the supreme council of each province. It guaranteed to the municipalities all those powers which they claimed by prescription or the general terms of remote charters, the title to enjoy ; and it recognised for the first time the important right of the cities to confer together by their duly chosen representatives on subjects of mutual concern. Foreigners were declared ineligible to the higher offices of administration ; and no individual was to be allowed to hold a second office at the same time.

⁵⁸ Davies, Vol. I. p. 284.

These were the chief political conditions ; those relative to industry were equally numerous and important. All taxes whatsoever, whether in the nature of tolls erected at particular places, or excises imposed generally, or customs charged on imports or exports, were made absolutely conditional on the assent of the States previously given in their legislative capacity. Without it the currency was in no instance to be altered, nor any new coinage issued. Finally, trade and commerce were declared to be free, and no regulation or observance was to be regarded as legal which trenched upon this liberty, unless duly authorised by the legislature.⁵⁹

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Such were the leading provisions of the Great Charter, under which the people were willing to live loyally, and to pursue, with the renewed vigour which the sense of security and freedom gives, their diversified and laborious industry. Commerce quickly shewed symptoms of revival ; new enterprises were undertaken ; and though great injuries were inflicted by the French on their unarmed vessels, especially those engaged in the herring-fisheries, the Dutch were generally “able to protect their own commerce,”⁶⁰ and sometimes to inflict exemplary chastisement on their powerful foes.

Stimulus to
trade.

A.D. 1479.

With Scotland and England a steady trade was maintained. Edward IV., when he seriously thought at all of state affairs, leaned uniformly to the interests of trade amongst his subjects, and took

Edward IV.
of England.

⁵⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 285.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 288.

CHAP. X. no pains to conceal the pleasure with which he anticipated the uprise of an industrial middle class in the towns,⁶¹ as furnishing the crown with an effectual and permanent ally against the formidable power of the Barons.

Campvere. Letters patent from Edward IV. secured to the merchants of Campvere, a rising port of Holland, the liberty of trading when and where they pleased in his dominions, reciprocal privileges being in return guaranteed to the English anew. Middleberg and other places negotiated similar conventions—for such in effect these arrangements were—with the Scotch and English governments.⁶² But it is instructive to observe that, while, from greater care, or the fact of their enjoying a peculiarly large amount of the trade with England, these towns obtained special acts of royal assurance and protection, no trace of an exclusive system is to be found; and the statutes of parliament contain abundant proof that the English were allowed to trade in the Netherlands without restriction to Campvere or other favoured ports.⁶³

Commerce
of the
Baltic.

But the most profitable commerce of the Hollanders, while under the *régime* of Burgundy, was that which they had gradually established with the kingdoms of the North. In this the enterprising men of Amsterdam had led the way,⁶⁴ and thereby laid the foundation of their city's eventual opulence

⁶¹ Smith, *Memoirs of Wool*, chap. 12.

⁶² Yair, p. 89.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 91.

⁶⁴ *La Richesse de la Hollande*, Tom. I. p. 32.

and fame. Unlike their brethren of the older towns they seldom ventured to provoke the resentment of their exacting sovereigns. Whether from a consciousness of the inutility of premature resistance, or the absorbing influence of their foreign relations (to which, perhaps, they were not desirous of attracting jealous scrutiny), they generally appear acquiescent or neutral in the quarrels of the time; and on some occasions their leaning seems to have been rather towards the side of the more powerful. In due season Amsterdam made ample amends for any seeming want of earnestness in the common cause of freedom. Meanwhile her commercial eminence began to rival that of Dort. In 1368 she had obtained from the King of Sweden a district in the Isle of Schonen, where a number of her citizens established themselves, under the rule of a governor, according to the laws and usages of Amsterdam; and, in common with the people of Enkhuysen and Wieringen, they were accorded by the same monarch many privileges and liberties in his realm. These concessions are supposed to have been made to them for the purpose of facilitating the direct traffic between their country and Sweden, by means of their own vessels, as “otherwise they must have dealt for the merchandises of the north at second-hand.”⁶⁵ These, which for the most part consisted of timber, iron, copper, tar, skins, and tallow,⁶⁶ they

⁶⁵ *La Richesse de la Hollande*,
Tom. I. p. 30.

⁶⁶ *Batavia Illustrata*, Part II.
§ 5.

CHAP.
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distributed by the Amstel, and the canals which intersected every part of Holland and Utrecht; by the stream of the Ye in Waterland, where they were free of toll; across the Zuyder Sea to Deventer and Zwolle; and to Flanders, by inland navigation.⁶⁷ In exchange for these commodities they sent the Swedes woollen cloth and linen, French wines, salt (for the manufacture of which they were long unrivalled), drugs, and spices.⁶⁸ The Zealanders won the friendship of the Kings of Denmark in like manner, and established with that country and Norway a similar traffic.

Parties,
from 1479
to 1481.

Party animosity occasionally reappeared. In the iron grasp of Philip and Charles its struggles were suspended, like the breath of that liberty which animated them, and without which they had probably never been heard of. With the relaxation of authority they seemed to come to life again. As was natural and inevitable, also, old feuds provoked here and there strange and wild ebullitions of passion. "Hook" and "Kabeljauw" were the signals of alarm, and rallying cries once more. Individuals were insulted, — in some cases seriously injured, — their property wantonly destroyed, — their lives endangered. In Utrecht, Leyden, Dort, and other towns, the Hook, or popular party, had the ascendancy; — in Haarlem, Delft, and Amsterdam, their antagonists prevailed;⁶⁹ and every where a dispo-

⁶⁷ *La Richesse de la Hollande*,
ut supra.

⁶⁸ *Batavia Illustrata*, ut supra.

⁶⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 294.

sition was manifested in the stronger side to mono-
polise power to themselves, all which, doubtless, is
justly noted by the faithful chronicler, and worthy
to be deplored. But let us not be carried away by
our regrets. What people, after all, have ever
become characteristically great in their maturity, in
whose developement such fermentation has not as
frequently occurred? And, while no man will deny
that the process is one that it is requisite to watch
anxiously, direct carefully, and to prevent being need-
lessly or mischievously prolonged,—it is assuredly
no part of the duty of those who have the power, to
attempt summarily its suppression, nor of the wise
and good to wish to see it thus dealt with, lest a
worse thing come upon them.

The rulers of the Netherlands, however, at the
period in question, were of another mind. Since
the marriage of Mary with the King of the Romans,
the powers of government had virtually been exer-
cised by him; and, after her death, his authority
continued, in the new capacity of regent, during the
minority of their infant son. Trained in the high
places of imperial feudalism, Maximilian did not
hesitate to interpose with a high hand between the
contending factions. His prejudices led him to
espouse decidedly the interest of the aristocratic
party. They voted, with promptitude, large sub-
sidies to enable him to carry on external wars for
objects in which their country had no concern. To
these the Hooks, as a party containing the greater
portion of the industrial community, both in town

CHAP.
X.

Exclusion
of the Hook
party.

A.D. 1482.

CHAP. and country, were naturally opposed. On the
 X. manufacturer, the merchant, and the farmer, the
 chief weight of feudal taxation fell, — the nobles
 being in general exempted, in right of their nobi-
 lity, from the payment of direct imposts.⁷⁰ When
 their influence, therefore, combined with that of the
 ducal government, had obtained an ascendancy in
 certain of the great towns of each province, an irre-
 sistible preponderance was established in the state
 legislatures, blinded by party zeal, and too ready to
 yield an assent to fiscal impositions.

Party pro-
 secutions.

Maximilian was easily led to regard the Hooks
 as no better than a disaffected populace, and to place
 his whole reliance upon the Kabeljauws as the
 only friends on whom his government could rely.
 He thus became in some degree, perhaps unconsci-
 ously, an instrument in the hands of one party to
 wreak their vengeance on the other. When the
 forms of law were inadequate to the accomplishment
 of this purpose, they were disregarded. The po-
 pular magistrates were every where dismissed; many
 of them were impeached for disobeying measures
 which they contended were illegal; two of them
 were condemned to death, and the rest banished.⁷¹
 Confiscations on an extensive scale followed these
 proceedings, and the spirit of the vanquished was
 broken for the time.

Prodigal ex-
 penditure.

The natural consequences of such a course of
 policy were not slow in developing themselves. The

⁷⁰ Davies, Vol. I. p. 311, note.

⁷¹ Ibid. Vol. I. pp. 293–296.

government having purchased the fidelity of one party at the cost of the other, retained their attachment by the bestowal upon them exclusively of trust and favour. No voice was any longer raised in remonstrance against prodigality or waste; errors were suffered to go unchecked until their results became irremediable, and then necessity was made the plea for neglecting the forms of the constitution, and at last of setting at nought both form and spirit. Year after year an expensive and inglorious contest was carried on with France for objects in which the Netherlands had no true concern. Incessant contributions were required from the States; and when these proved inadequate, recourse was had to the ruinous expedient of tampering with the currency.⁷²

Added to this, the *ruytergeld*, or composition paid for exemption from military service, became daily more and more frequent, until the means of the peasantry were exhausted, and no alternative remained for many but to join the army. Agriculture was thus impeded, while trade was overburdened, and so rapidly did poverty increase during this disastrous period that in Leyden the number of persons receiving public relief amounted at one time to 10,000; and in Amsterdam they were still more numerous; while in the compara-

⁷² “L’argent, pendant ces mauvaises années, augmenta si prodigieusement que les revenus des rentiers se trouvèrent extrêmement réduits. En conséquence les

seigneurs de la cour tinrent conseil afin de délibérer s’il ne convenoit pas de diminuer le numéraire des espèces.”—Recherches sur le Commerce, Tom I. p. 125.

CHAP. X. tively small town of Hoorn, whose industry had been fatally blighted in the previous reign, no fewer than 2000 names were now upon the paupers' list.⁷³ The patience of the multitude at length gave way, and, for the first time, we hear the wild cry of an agrarian war.

The bread-
and-cheese
war, 1491.

The Casem-brot-spel, or "bread-and-cheese war," broke forth among the agricultural inhabitants of the Kemmerland and Waterland, amongst whom an attempt had been made to exact the ruytergeld by force. Two lives were lost in the struggle ; and, to avenge their death, a large number of the peasantry took arms. Once raised, the standard of revolt was quickly surrounded by a vast and various multitude, who, maddened by long-accumulated wrongs, imagined that as common sufferings had summoned them together, they possessed the power of mutually procuring for one another vengeance and redress. The former was as much within their power as the latter was beyond it. Spreading themselves in every direction, they daily gained adherents, and taking possession of many of the lesser towns, they inflicted summary retribution on the real or supposed instruments of the tyranny under which they so long had groaned. But as weeks and months rolled on, apparently without any very decisive attempt on the part of the ducal government to suppress the revolt, their powerlessness to effect any substantial change grew ob-

⁷³ Davies, Vol. I. pp. 311, 312.

vious, and the burden of supporting such an armed and unprofitably employed mass became intolerable. Heavy as the ordinary taxes were, they were trivial when compared with the capricious exactions of an armed and undisciplined multitude.⁷⁴ The burghers, who at first had, through sympathy or terror, yielded an outward show of acquiescence to the movement, began to seek only for the means of getting rid of their dangerous guests; and whenever they succeeded in persuading them to quit the city precincts, means were adopted for resisting their return. It was in vain that deputies from many villages and rural districts of Guelderland and Friezland assembled at Hoorn and proclaimed their resolution to pay ruytergeld no more. No city of any wealth or eminence took part with them, and the inhabitants of Haarlem shut the gates on their approach; whereupon they took the place by assault, and proceeded to rifle the houses of the richer citizens. The treasurer's and the orphans' chests were plundered; and, as if to complete the scene of anarchy, the charters of the city and other records were brought forth and torn in pieces!⁷⁵

Thus blind or misdirected, it is not strange that, after many abortive struggles, the insurrection was completely put down, as all rash outbreaks of the kind have ever been. In no instance upon record has an agrarian war succeeded, unaided by

Suppression
of revolt.

⁷⁴ Davies, ut supra.

⁷⁵ Davies, Vol. I. p. 314.

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X.

the wealth and intelligence of other classes of the community than those which can properly be included in its ranks. An acute sense of physical suffering is indeed at all times a fearful element with which political discontent may combine ; but, unallied with other impulses, hunger has accomplished less by its importunities or its threatenings than probably any other influence, either good or evil.

Executive
revenge.
1493.

The suppression of the *casem-brot-spel* was signalled by new severities. All that had served to provoke resistance was enforced more stringently than before, and on the plea of apprehension for the public safety, the privileges of several cities were abridged, the fortifications of others were dismantled, and garrisons of foreign troops were stationed in many of them. But though resistance was thus for a long time rendered futile, a system more calculated to alienate the whole nation and to embitter the already numerous causes of discontent, could not have been devised. The presence of any other standing force than the *schuterye* or burgher-guard of each town, was an offence which neither usage nor circumstance could lead the *Hollanders* to pardon. Their fathers had been able to protect themselves and defend their free land, and so could they.

Ducal mis-
rule.

“ A bad government fills a country with soldiers, a good government with merchants, who live not well together because they cannot trust one another ; and trade cannot grow or thrive without trust in the government and an opinion of its wisdom and

justice.”⁷⁶ These sentiments were universal, and every year struck firmer and deeper root in the mind of all classes ; but the hands of the ducal government were strengthened and its heart hardened by unsuccessful opposition to its will, and it blindly stumbled forward on its misguided way. As insatiable in his demands as his ally the King of England, and as willing to “make use of laws to harrow his people,” for objects of personal ambition, Maximilian fell far short of Henry VII. in the sagacity with which he strove to repair the evils he had wrought, and still further in the wisdom of administrative economy.⁷⁷ At one time the people saw their trade with England interrupted and their merchants expelled that realm, while the English factories in the Netherlands were dissolved, because the duchess dowager of Burgundy, being a princess of the house of York, was bound in honour to hate “Henry of Richmond” even unto death, and to harass his government by harbouring such pretenders to the crown as Simnel and Warbeck. At another time they beheld the citadels of Haarlem, Medemblick, and Woerden, pawned to the Duke of Saxony for a sum of money, not to be repaid for several years. At all times they saw the highest offices in their country conferred on strangers ignorant of their wants and incapable of intelligent sympathy with their peculiar and paramount feelings. Year after year rolled by and no

⁷⁶ Temple, Observations on the United Provinces, chap. 6.

⁷⁷ Bacon, Hist. Henry VII. Works, Vol. III. pp. 309, 327.

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amendment was perceptible. Disheartened and distressed, the many sat in sorrow, and the few waited doubtfully to see the end.

Philip the
Fair.

At length it seemed at hand. The death of the Emperor called Maximilian to the throne of Germany, and he resigned the government of the Netherlands to his youthful son with the title of Duke of Brabant. Philip was not yet eighteen when the cares of rule devolved upon him, and his initiatory measures betrayed the arrogance and vanity of inexperience. But these faults appertained rather to his words than his actions, and the Dutch were willing to forgive the arrogance of his tone in refusing to be bound by the terms of the Great Charter, when he proceeded to affirm anew all its leading provisions as of his own free grace and favour. Still more did he gain on their good-will when his pacific disposition became apparent, and he presented to the senates of the leading cities the draught of a commercial treaty with England, conceived in a wise and liberal spirit, and eminently fitted to advance the real welfare of both countries.⁷⁸

Their assent was gladly given, and the ratifications having been interchanged, the English merchants returned to reopen the staple trade amidst the warmest demonstrations of popular joy. It was not by any fault of the people that they had been obliged to withdraw; the welcome that greeted them was all the more hearty, therefore, on their

A.D. 1496.

⁷⁸ De Witt, Part. II. ch. 3.

return.⁷⁹ Nor did they over-estimate the value of the new compact, which long went by the name of CHAP.
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 “The Grand Treaty of Commerce.” Its provisions were, in all respects, reciprocal, and enabled every kind of merchandise to be freely imported from either country by the citizens of the other. The entire liberty of fishing on each others’ coasts was confirmed ; measures were prescribed for the suppression of piracy ; and property saved from wrecks, when none of the crew survived, was vested in the local authorities in trust for the proper owners, should they appear to claim it within a year and a day.⁸⁰

Bruges had hitherto enjoyed the greater portion of the traffic with Scotland, and its repute for wealth and for being one of the best-established markets of the north of Europe, naturally tended to retain a considerable amount there. But intelligence and competition were daily presenting local inducements in other places. The transit from Bruges, or from Middleberg, to many parts of Holland, was long in those days, why not save this needless charge and hazard, and effect the interchange of national products through less notable but more convenient channels? Thus we find Campvere vying with Middleberg which of them should make the most engaging offers to draw the traffic to themselves, the latter having a large

Competi-
tion of
Campvere
and Middle-
berg.

⁷⁹ Bacon, Hist. Henry VII.
p. 128.

⁸⁰ Rymer, Fœdera, Tom. XI.
p. 578.

CHAP. X. — trade and ready market for Scotch and English goods lying in the Scheldt, and not yielding for a flourishing trade to any other town in the neighbourhood, while “Campvere had much the same A.D. 1495. conveniency for the Scottish trade,”⁸¹ inasmuch as a voyage from Scotland to the Island of Walcheren differs very little as to the distance from a voyage to Sluys or Bruges but according to the weather,⁸² “only Middleberg was better furnished with goods which the Scotch wanted to buy and carry home to their own country.”⁸³

“The bad bargain.”

Philip appreciated the benefits of peace, both abroad and at home, and neither prevented the accumulation of wealth by war-taxes, nor distracted the attention of his subjects by infractions of their privileges.⁸⁴ Had he never lent a facile ear to flatterers, the soubriquet of “*croit conseil*” had never been attached to his name. But he was young and very “fair” when called to wield the powers of sovereignty; and, perhaps, the grave Netherlanders did not widely err in thinking that few so tempted fell so unfrequently astray. In the A.D. 1506. last year of his reign he was induced by Henry VII., during a brief visit to his court, to modify, in certain particulars, the treaty of 1496; reciprocal engagements were, for the first time, contracted for the surrender of political fugitives; and in the hope of attaining family objects, which were des-

⁸¹ Yair, p. 92.

⁸² Ibid. p. 95.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 92.

⁸⁴ Davies, Vol. I. p. 334.

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 A.D. 1506.

timed never to be realised, he consented to forego the ordinary port-dues on English merchandise entered at Middleberg and Bergen-op-Zoom, as well as at certain Flemish towns. These duties having been levied heretofore indiscriminately and for revenue, this exemption was naturally regarded by his own subjects as a mere partiality and extortion. No corresponding benefits accrued to their exports to England; and the Hollanders were accustomed to speak of the treaty thus concluded at Windsor as "the bad bargain." Its inequality was redressed in the following reign; but Philip having gone to take possession of Castile, to which, in right of his wife, he had lately succeeded, died prematurely there in the twenty-ninth year of his age.

A.D. 1507.

Margaret of Savoy.

Charles V. being yet a child, the administration of the Netherlands was confided by Maximilian to his daughter, Margaret of Savoy. Her capacity for affairs and estimable private character served materially to lessen the difficulties of her task, by enabling her sometimes to repair by diplomacy the evils she wanted power to avert, and gradually to attract to her government a certain sympathy and respect. But on the whole her rule was necessarily one of temporary expedients, which, however ingeniously adapted to the exigency of the moment, were, from the nature of them, incapable of frequent repetition. From Guelderland the provinces of Utrecht and Holland were continually harassed by a species of predatory warfare. The sale of the dukedom in 1472 had never been recognised by the lineal

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X.

heir; and having gained possession of a large portion of his hereditary domains, and being secretly aided by France, he had given considerable uneasiness both to Maximilian and Philip the Fair. The weakness of the new regency offered still further opportunities of encroachment and revenge, and the counsels of Margaret were perpetually engrossed by apprehensions of attack from her young and enterprising neighbour, whose title she was forbidden, by the Emperor, to recognise, and whose formidable bands she could seldom count upon any available force to repel.⁸⁵

Weakness
of the go-
vernment.

Maximilian, who had been obliged to pawn certain of the imperial jewels to the King of England for a sum of 50,000 crowns, was utterly unable to furnish assistance; and the states of Zealand and Holland, eager to seize the opportunity which the weakness of the government seemed to afford, for the recovery of their ancient prerogative, yielded every year with more and more difficulty the demands for supplies.

A.D. 1515. Nor did the accession of Charles to the sovereignty, first of the Netherlands and soon afterwards of Spain, divert them from their purpose. His attention for some time was too much engrossed by more important concerns; and Margaret, in whose hands the administration still continued as viceroy of her nephew, was nearly as powerless as before. The reluctance of the States to grant new supplies rather
A.D. 1527. increased than diminished; and at length they

⁸⁵ Davies, Vol. I. pp. 337, et seq.

resolved upon refusing them altogether. Their negotiations and all the usual resources of private influence were made use of to dissuade some and to deter others from persisting in their opposition, and in most cases successfully. Pressing and peculiar necessities were constantly assigned as justifying the viceregal demand; but as the deputies were stringently bound by instructions beforehand from their constituents, a fair show of reason was rendered indispensable.

CHAP.
X.

On one remarkable occasion the money “petition,” as it was called, having been absolutely refused, many expostulations were resorted to on behalf of the government, and the imminent dangers of an irruption of the Guelderlanders vividly portrayed; but in vain. The States would grant nothing until certain demands of theirs were acceded to, one of which was a repeal of the duty imposed for revenue on the exportation of corn. Permits were granted under the ducal seal to all who desired to carry on this branch of trade, and it does not appear that any fraud or partiality in the operation of the system was put forward as ground for its abolition. But the Zealanders and Hollanders were daily learning to understand more distinctly that their country “depended on the sea,” and that for them free commerce was above and beyond all things needful. They could not afford to be crippled by impediments and fetters of this kind any more. Security from invasion was as dear to them as to most men, many of their towns and

Sack of the
Hague.
A.D. 1528.

CHAP.
X.

villages being wholly unfortified. But freedom of traffic was desirable too,—worth risking much to win. Until the corn-duties were abandoned they would vote no new supplies. The government refused to accede to these terms, and “deep murmurs among the deputies” were beginning to arise, when suddenly their resolves were determined by an event no less startling than the surprise and pillage of the Hague. At midnight a band of Guelderland troops entered the defenceless town, uttering the war-cry of their province. The terrified inhabitants fled, and their effects became the uncounted spoil of the plunderers. Gold, silver, jewels, and whatever else was capable of removal, were huddled into beds out of which the feathers had been taken, and carried off without any attempt at prevention. The States waived all the objections they had been previously urging, and guaranteed the loan that had been required. But the people, not perhaps unjustly, believed that they had been betrayed. They remembered with an implacable sense of wrong the absence of all attempts on the part of the authorities to impede the retreat of the pillagers. Of the few houses in the district that escaped, several were said to belong to official persons: the coincidence might have been accidental, but, under the circumstances, the sinister inference from the fact was readily and tenaciously believed.

Corn-duties
continued.

And the duty on corn remained for some years longer a source of heartburning and memento of

misrule. The people sullenly refused to become purchasers of the loan which had been undertaken with such unhappy omens : it was eventually funded, however, and an adequate guard appointed for the defence of the eastern frontier. Peace having, moreover, been concluded in the following year, the benefits of foreign trade in some degree revived. Notwithstanding the incessant hindrances thrown in its way, the spirit of enterprise had been steadily extending. No obstacle could daunt, no neglect dishearten, no waste by injury or exertion in war could abate, the energy, the thrift, the speculation of this singular people. Loss by land or loss by sea, unequal assessment or uncalled-for contributions, compulsory service in armies enrolled for no concern of theirs, or reiterated payments of the ruytergeld instead,—nothing could quench in the popular mind the instinct of industry,—the belief that, after all, it was the best thing,—the practical conviction that therein lay the only chance for them of ultimate redemption. Think, had they acted otherwise, what their fate must have been.

The very magnitude of their losses marks the degree of opulence they were beginning to acquire, and the indefatigable temper of their toil, under circumstances the most depressing. We have seen how grievously Hoorn was treated in the reign of Charles the Bold. Its manufacturers were scattered ; its repute for skill lessened ; its right arm maimed cruelly, and broken. For a time we hear little more of Hoorn, until the annalists of Mar-

CHAP.
X.

A.D. 1529.

Losses of
Hoorn.

CHAP. X.
A.D. 1511. garet's regency, recounting the sore trouble brought on the Hollanders by reason of a falling out with the men of Lubeck and Bremen, wherein many seizures were made and sufferings endured on both side, while the foolish quarrel lasted, mention is incidentally made of sixty merchant-ships laden with copper which were captured in the Baltic. To several of the towns the loss thus incurred was very serious,—that of Hoorn being particularly named as amounting to no less than twenty thousand guilders.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EMPIRE.

“The people of Brabant reminded Philip, that by the feudal law the lord loseth the right of his fee by the same occasion of felony that the vassal forfeits his right to the lord; inferring thereby, that by reason of the Inquisition, the which did attempt manifestly against the lands and goods of the king’s vassals, they might justly forget their duty of fealty to him that brought it in by force and fraud. This practice of provoking people to profitable offences hath been ancient, and is usual with tyrants; and clergymen are made the instruments and actors to invade the liberties of others. The people, notwithstanding, proceeded, by way of petition, to the king, but to no purpose; for contrary resolutions were taken in Spain (where the king was in person, where all counsels were forged, and whence the Netherlanders hoped for redress), that all men’s goods and lands, together with all ancient privileges, should be forfeited and lost.”¹

FEUDAL union as a system of rule may be considered as having been fairly and fully tried in the Netherlands, under the House of Burgundy, during a period of well-nigh a hundred years.²

CHAP.
XI.

THE
DUTCH.

¹ Hexam, “A Tongue-combat between Redscarf and Tawny-scarf, two soldiers returned from the wars in the Low Countries.” London, 1603. Pp. 21-26.

² From 1426, when Philip the Good became sovereign of the Dutch provinces, to 1519, when Charles V. was elected emperor.

CHAP.
XI.
Feudal
union.

At first it seemed to succeed marvellously well ; the countervailing evils had not come ; the local tribunals were not interfered with ; the local liberties were not infringed ; and a business community are seldom given to political conjecture or hypothesis ; they do not realise distant or vague contingencies ; they will never be influenced materially in their conduct by theoretic demonstrations of the possibility of mischiefs that they have never experienced, and never may. The Dutch knew the miseries of feudal provincialism,—its exposure, its helplessness, its perpetual fear : it seemed a blessed thing to get rid of all these. Were they to reject a union because it came to them by feudal accident and wore a feudal form ? What other form of supreme government had they ever known ? Feudalism seemed to be essential and inevitable ; and the only clear idea which the Dutch had at the time was, that if feudal lords must be, it was better to have one than several.

Philip the Good was probably as just a ruler, and infinitely an abler one, than any count of Holland whom popular tradition held in remembrance.³ Though arbitrary, he was wise ; though proud of his power, he was fond of peace ; though prodigal in expenditure, he attempted not to raise taxes without lawful consent, and he effectively encouraged industry. If his arm was strong, its blow seldom fell but upon evil-doers, or the external enemies

³ “ He took no pretence from his greatness to change any thing in the forms of his government.”

—Temple, *Observ. on Unit. Prov.* Chap. I.

of his people. Yet it must not be forgotten, that by the personal ascendancy of such men constitutional liberty has frequently been undermined. The habit of acquiescence in Philip's demands rendered it all the more difficult to resist those of his worthless successors; and the penalty of over-confidence in one well-disposed but irresponsible sovereign, was paid by the Dutch in the disastrous reigns that followed.

The same hereditary chance that concentrated several provincial chieftainries in the ducal crown of Burgundy, was destined to wreck the hopes of national contentment by still further combinations, permanently unsuited to a single administration, and which from the nature of their elements were hopelessly insusceptible of fusion or assimilation. Charles the Bold, dying without male issue, left his fair inheritance to his daughter Mary, whose son, by her marriage with the Emperor Maximilian, having espoused the Infanta of Spain, the whole of these vast dominions in a few years became concentrated in the hands of their son, the celebrated Charles V. To deny that many advantages followed from the gradual incorporation of the Seventeen provinces into one powerful state would be absurd. Their internecine feuds, carried on to the latest hour of their separate existence, were alone productive of infinite evil. So long as the Hague was in danger of being sacked by the Duke of Guelderland, and Utrecht of being occupied by an army from Holland, national greatness or prosperity was impossible. Even minor

CHAP.
XI.

Charles V.

A.D. 1477.

A.D. 1519.

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XI.

— differences formed effectual barriers in the way of national progress. Each province had a coinage of its own,—a serious impediment to internal traffic, a direct tax on time in every transaction between neighbouring provincials, and a frequent source of misunderstanding and perplexity. These and many other evils the centralisation of the executive authority afforded the only means of abating, if not of removing altogether; and to such ends its sanctions were invoked by the representatives of the people on more than one occasion.⁴

A.D. 1531.

Connexion
with Spain
and Ger-
many.

But all such benefits were rendered of little value by the endless evils which flowed from the union of the Netherlands in the hands of an ambitious and arbitrary sovereign, whose abilities, had they been even greater than they were, must have failed to embrace the numerous and distracting duties of the scattered regions which equally claimed his regard. If the provinces were saved from internal conflict, they were drained by contributions to support wars undertaken without the “consent of the nobles and good towns.”⁵ If their intercourse with one another was rendered easier and more secure, the disastrous enmity of puissant states like England and France was more apt to fall upon their foreign trade, as the danger of an edifice is increased by the loftiness of its spire. The wise neutrality, under plea of which their commerce had so often ridden safely through the storms of wide-

⁴ Recherches sur la Commerce,
Tom. I. p. 79.

⁵ Davies, Vol. I. p. 380.

spread war, was no longer to be hoped for. If the King of Denmark was affronted with the Emperor CHAP.
XI. their ships and cargoes were in jeopardy,⁶ for the Emperor was their sovereign lord. If the King of England took umbrage at the King of Spain, their exports to the dominions of the former were summarily declared contraband and forfeit,⁷ for their sovereign was King of Spain. Nay their very export trade, — that which, from having almost nothing of home-growth to send out, they had, by dint of surpassing industry, created and made, — buying abroad, and bringing into their *entrepôts* for reshipment, when required elsewhere, every species of useful or rare commodity, silks and hemp, Indian spice, and Baltic corn, — their entire commerce was treated as natural prey by the vulture of imperial exaction, and drained of its lifestream. In a touching remonstrance presented in 1531 by the deputies of Holland, when asked for fresh contributions by Charles V., it is stated that in the three preceding years they had contributed 380,000 guilders, to meet the charges of an unpopular, and to them most mischievous war; yet now, on the return of peace, they were desired to grant for six years an annual contribution of 100,000 more.⁸

From the general peace which was made at Cambray a return of prosperity might reasonably have been anticipated. By express stipulation the Religious
differences.

⁶ Davies, Vol. I. p. 431.

⁷ Memoirs of Wool, ch. 8.

⁸ Davies, Vol. I. p. 387.

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A.D. 1529.

old "freedom of trade with England was entirely restored;"⁹ and there seemed to be no further pretence for those exactions which for several years had wasted the substance and damped the enterprise of the people. Unhappily there lay at the door an evil greater even than war, and for a time more destructive of social and industrial progress than the open hostility of a foreign foe. Religious differences began to shew themselves. The tenets of Luther and Erasmus had struck deep root every where among the Netherlanders, and more especially among the inhabitants of the towns. In nothing was the national character more strikingly shewn. Some adhered to the ancient creed, some embraced the new. Only on one point they were unanimous and inflexible,—that all men had a right to choose for themselves to what church they should belong. The municipal authorities refused to take cognisance of the religious crimes which the imperial edicts affected to create. Their contumacy offended and irritated Charles, and he seized the first opportunity presented by the cessation of war to turn the arm of power against the rebellious questioners of the religion of the state.¹¹ Unity of faith and uniformity of worship, he would have—nay, he would endure nothing short of it in his dominions; and though he did not succeed, his successor did, not by converting the people, but by reducing his do-

⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 382.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 383.

¹¹ Bentivoglio, Part I. Book I.

minions to the limits of such submission: rather a stupid method of procedure, yet one that seems to have a strange charm for governments even unto this day.

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XI.

Yet here, as every where in the history of mankind, out of the evil cometh forth good,—as out of the fire the tempered steel,—and after the storm the freshened and healthful air. We have seen the struggles of the Netherlanders for leave to toil, leave to enjoy its fruit,—for life, and for those things that render life a civilised progress instead of mere barbaric being. We have glanced at some of their struggles,—for food, self-assessment, local jurisdictions, native rulers,—and marked the tenacity with which they combated for each and all of these, and how when one was riven from them by the arm of power they clutched the rest only the more firmly, ready to recapture that which was lost when opportunity served. But fairly computing gains and losses, the balance of political privileges at the close of the fifteenth century does not so far exceed that of the thirteenth, as the bravery, consistency, and industrial energy of the people in the interval eminently deserved. They had been fitting themselves for freedom in many ways, but as yet they had not attained it. They had endured and were schooled to long-suffering,—a good and great thing: but history tells of suffering too long, after which there cometh no resurrection. They had fought valiantly unequal battles, and were ready to fight again: but for what? Something less essentially a

Bonds of
sympathy.

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XI.

question of detail and degree than taxes more or less,—or rights *de non evocando*,—was requisite to arm them for national or abiding victory. A sentiment—something that admitted not of compromise,—something that old age and youth, feminine zeal and manly hardihood, alike could feel, and could not cease to feel—was wanting: and this the differences of religion were now to supply.¹² Do we shrink from a truth that comes upon us with such froward aspect? Or, weary and sore with the polemic jars of our own time, refuse to own its force? We can gain nothing by cowardliness, or fast shutting of the eyes; ungainly or ungracious though the form of a truth be, is it not better to make a friend of it than to drive it into latent enmity to our insecure convictions?

Earnest-
ness.

It has been truly said that, “as there is nothing of real importance in the moral and intellectual business of human life, the source of which does not lie in a profound relation of man and his concerns to God and divine things, so it is impossible to conceive a nation worthy of the name, or entitled to be called, in any sense, great, whose political existence is not constantly guided by religious ideas.”¹⁶ Among the Dutch the doctrines of Luther and Erasmus had obtained an early dissemination, while their sovereign continued to regard these doctrines as untrue, and their profession as an offence, both to his authority and to that of Heaven. Here was

¹² Ranke, Hist. Reform. Vol. I. p. 6.

a quarrel admitting of no truce—a difference not of degree, but essential, in comparison with which all others were as nought—involving all that every man, of every class, or temper, or station, in the community held most dear. For this was an earnest and deliberate people. Not lightly or thoughtlessly had they changed their faith, but upon reasons which to them appeared irrefutable. Could they palter with the hope they had forsaken old ties, associations, teachings, memories, to win? They must live in it, come weal or woe,—for in it they must die!

What doctrines they espoused this is not the place to inquire; subscribers to the Confession of Augsburg and followers of Calvin,—those who thought Erasmus had gone far enough in reform, and those who deemed Anabaptism the most perfect way;¹³ their heroic loyalty to their conviction of the truth of them is that alone with which we have here to do. Sound or unsound they believed in them with a whole heart, and that belief, more than all other things, gave them deliverance and victory. To say that, nationally, they might not have won independence otherwise would be idle. There were grievances enough of a fiscal and judicial kind to keep alive a spirit of popular jealousy; and Grotius does not hesitate to ascribe the first resolution to resist, to the imposition of illegal taxes.¹⁴ But having regard to the local differences that

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Diversities
of opinion.

¹³ Mosheim, Book IV.

¹⁴ De Reb. Belg. Lib. II. p. 34.

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in the sixteenth century severed the provinces from one another,—the sparse population of many of them, and the inherent weakness of all,—it can hardly be doubted that the introduction of such an element as religious feeling was indispensable to the success of a conflict, like that on which they were entering with so gigantic a power as Spain.

Intolerance
of dissent.

Was opinion then a crime? Elsewhere it had no doubt been long deemed such, and dealt with accordingly. Severities against those who were found guilty of disloyalty to the religion of the state had for centuries been practised in Spain, France,¹⁵ and England; and, on many occasions, the zeal of the multitude outran that of their rulers. But in the Netherlands it had not been so. Under Charlemagne it is true that “conquest and conversion went hand-in-hand,”¹⁶ and the native heathen rites of the Frisians had been swept away by the same irresistible arm that added the Sea-lands to the Frankish empire. But seven centuries had passed away since then. Charlemagne and his baptisms of blood,—his burnings to death of relapsed Pagans,—and founding of bishoprics as

¹⁵ “Depuis le roi St. Louis il y avait en effet en France un office de l’Inquisition confié au provincial des Dominicains ou Frères Prêcheurs, et aux gardiens des Frères Mineurs de Paris. Ils devaient, par eux ou par le vicaire qu’ils avaient dans chaque diocèse, se faire délivrer les procédures faites contre des

hérétiques, ou procéder contre eux de leur propre mouvement, et implorer, s’il le falloit le bras séculier contre les dits hérétiques, à moins que les accuses ne se soumissent entièrement à l’Eglise.” —Barante, Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne, Tom. VI. p. 87.

¹⁶ Ranke, History of the Reformation, Vol. I. p. 5.

trophies of victory,¹⁷ had faded into the doubtful land between traditionary fact and fable.

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Toleration was no political expedient among the Dutch suggested by the necessities of their peculiar condition. It was the instinct and habit, and traditional law of right in the heart of the nation, the observance of which they could boast with honest pride for ages — ages in which every kingdom and principality around them streamed with innocent blood. Before the great schism of the sixteenth century, it may be said that there existed comparatively little room for the exercise of such wisdom and virtue. Not so; — there were the Jews, — the victims every where of the most sordid and cowardly persecution at the hands of the ignorant and fanatical populace — the prey of every authorised extortioner, from the Emperor to his meanest vassal, — every where but in the Netherlands. There alone they dared at all times to breathe freely, to stand upright without fear, to remember that of one flesh hath God made all the nations of the earth. And “it is certain, freedom of religion having been always greater in Holland than any where else, it hath brought in many inhabitants, and driven out but few.”¹⁸

Materials hardly exist for an account of the earlier immigrations of the Jews into Holland. But the inference from the few and scattered facts that are generally known seems irresistible.

¹⁷ Ranke, Vol. I. p. 6.

¹⁸ De Witt, Part I. chap. 18.

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By the laws of Edward the Confessor, all Jews were slaves, and whatever they had was declared to be the property of the king, useable at his pleasure. "The King of England was wont to draw a considerable revenue from the Jews residing in the realm, by tallage fines, amerciaments, ransoms, and compositions, which they were forced to pay for having the King's protection and license to trade. He would tallage the whole community of them at pleasure, and make them answer for one another. He seemed to be absolute lord of their effects, and of the persons of them, their wives, and children. And as they fleeced the King's subjects by their usuries, so the King fleeced them."¹⁹

Condition
of the Jews
in England.

Nor did the royal protection, for which they paid so dear, avail them against lawless outrage. At the coronation of Richard I., on the circulation of a rumour that some gifts presented by the Jews were meant to bewitch the King, an indiscriminate pillage and massacre took place of all who could be found in London; and still more revolting scenes were enacted at York. Numbers fled the kingdom in terror, and were with difficulty persuaded, by special grants of safe conduct from King John, to return. How bitterly they had cause to repent of their credulity in his promises is well known. In violation of all his pledges, he suddenly issued orders, committing all of them, men, women, and children, to prison, until they should pay the extor-

¹⁹ Madox, ch. 7, § 1, p. 150.

tionate sum of 66,000 marks. Some paid their quota and once more fled; others were tortured and many died in gaol. Henry III. liberated the survivors and was disposed to treat them leniently; but unpopular himself, he was wholly unable to protect them. Several of the bishops enjoined the people of their respective dioceses neither to buy or sell, give food or shelter to the Jews, in order that they might be thus expelled the kingdom; and when, in 1262, the Barons appeared in arms to enforce the observance of the Great Charter, in order to propitiate the populace they put several hundreds of this unhappy race to the sword.²⁰ All sorts of crimes,—necromancy, coining, infanticide, and charging interest for money,—were imputed to them, the last being in reality their grand offence. We find them unconditionally banished from England and their property confiscated by the parliaments of Edward I., that sagacious prince “being unable to protect them any longer.”²¹

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In France their fate was little better, though more variable. In 1182, they were banished by Philip Augustus and their entire property confiscated to the crown. Some years afterwards they purchased leave to return; but in the reign of St. Louis they were legislatively declared to be, not only, like other serfs, *adscripti glebæ*, but, if they embraced Christianity, baptism was regarded as an act of bankruptcy and all their effects escheated to

The Jews
in France.

²⁰ M. Paris, p. 229, &c.

²¹ Parliamentary History, Vol. I. p. 38.

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their lord. They were compelled to wear a distinguishing badge, and forbidden to hold intercourse with Christians. Thus marked out for scorn and injury, they fell an easy prey at each new outbreak of fanaticism. In 1238 upwards of 2000 victims were put to death in different parts of France, and the persecution was only arrested by the interposition of Pope Gregory IX.²² In the following reign they had some respite, and acquired both wealth and station; but, in 1300, an edict was published by Philip le Bel, commanding the Jews who would not embrace Christianity to quit the kingdom upon pain of death, all their property escheating to the crown. Again, under Louis X., they bought permission to return; and after many alternations of suffering and repose, they were finally expelled the kingdom in 1394.

The Jews
in Spain.

Until the close of the fourteenth century their fate had been better in the Peninsula. Many of their learned men were the teachers and advisers of the Spanish princes, and the commerce of the country was chiefly in their hands. But, at last, the fatal torch of religious persecution was kindled, which was destined only to be quenched in the ruin of the trade and power of Spain. Two thousand Jews were put to death for refusal to adopt Christianity; and confiscations and imprisonments were still more numerous: but all partial expedients proving ineffectual, it was resolved, in 1492, to rid the realm of the unbelievers by a decree of indiscriminate

²² Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, p. 637, &c.

and perpetual banishment. The numbers who quitted Spain under this edict are variously estimated at from 800,000 to 1,000,000 souls. Many took refuge in Italy, where they were generally treated with humanity; some for a time found shelter in Portugal, but were eventually driven thence also. And thus, during the sixteenth century, the Jews of England, France, and Spain, were but too happy to find such an asylum open to them as the tolerant and trading Netherlands. "In Holland they have at all times enjoyed more freedom and prosperity than in any other part of the world."²³

A curious illustration of the capricious alterations of good and evil to which the industry of the people was exposed under the absolutism of imperial rule is afforded by the transactions of 1543. In the indiscriminating effort to obtain supplies by any and every means, Charles had been induced to issue a decree imposing heavy additional duties on the export of grain. Tax on the export of grain. A prompt and firm remonstrance was framed by the States-General, and laid before the Emperor. Charles was struck with the manly sense and justice of the appeal, and declared that he would hear the deputies plead the cause of their country against his own decree. On a set day, accordingly, in the presence of the Grand Council of Malines, the imperious but not ungenerous monarch invited them to impeach the obnoxious act without reserve: he would have it defended by the lips of his Procurer-general; and,

²³ Basnage, pp. 691-738.—Mariana, Lib. XXVI. cap. 1.

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XI.Charles's
sentence
against his
own decree.13th Oct.
1548.

as though it bare not seal or signature of his, he would sit in judgment on its provisions.

The memorable cause came on. The emboldened deputies maintained the right of their fellow-citizens to bring in foreign corn whensoever they listed, and to send it forth again whithersoever they found it in demand, without license, mulct, or payment of any other duty than the inoppressive, one long established by law.²⁶ Then royalty heard its own side of the question supported, we may well suppose, with the usual flatteries of prerogative and power that became attorney-generals of the sixteenth century pleading on behalf of the crown. The judgment of Charles was in all respects worthy of his fame. It formally abrogated the impolitic decree, and recognised in the amplest terms the right to import and re-export grain of every kind at the moderate rates of toll and custom which had been payable under the previously existing law.²⁷

Well might the eloquent chronicler of Dutch industry, when reviewing the varied policy of centuries, exclaim that Charles was "the only monarch who had given such an example of equity and appreciation of the benefits of commerce."²⁸ Not content with rescinding merely the ill-considered measure, his sentence, in order that it might be a record for future times, was made to embody the reasons on which it rested,—the perils to trade from arbitrary molestations of its freedom,—the causes which had

²⁶ In 1495.²⁷ Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. II. p. 495.²⁸ Ibid.

tended to its uprising in Holland, and those which would lead to its downfall.

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Several attempts were subsequently made to renew the tax on exported corn, not for any purpose of commercial policy, but simply for revenue. And for a short time the prohibition to ship grain from the ports of the Netherlands to foreign countries was enacted, permits being granted at a high charge by the government for exemption. The corn-ships of the Baltic passed by the ports where they had so long been used to discharge their cargoes, which in part were re-shipped elsewhere. The merchants of the great towns pointed to the fact in support of their warnings that trade, if thus interfered with, would pass away from their land; and it is worthy of note that the people of the Waterland, one of the few districts in Holland where corn was grown, joined earnestly in petitioning for the removal of a tax which some would call protective of their peculiar interest. The remonstrances of all sections of the community at length prevailed, and the trade in grain was left free once more.²⁹

A majority of the Belgians remained loyal to the ancient faith, but a large minority revolted to the new. In the Dutch provinces, ecclesiastical disaffection was still more incorrigible. There a vast preponderance of the community embraced the Reformation. Holland and Zealand were particularly decided in their course; Guelderland, Overysse, and Utrecht, were for a time more divided in opinion. And division being henceforth inevitable—

Uniformity
of worship.

²⁹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 442.

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divided, yet co-existent in the unity of peace and the liberty of conscience—the inhabitants of the seventeen states might have long remained, had not Charles, unfurled the fatal standard of royal uniformity, and declared all men rebels to the state who professed any other faith than that of their king.³² Mandatory notices to forego all novel modes of worship were sent forth; then admonitory proclamations, followed by edicts full of penalties and threats of further vengeance. But all in vain. An additional impetus seemed to be given to the new doctrines. Piqued by popular obstinacy into still more violent measures, despotism forgot the character of the people with whom it had to deal,—their habit of perseverance, their tenacity of purpose, their reliance on themselves, their fortitude, their inflexibility, their growing power.

Fusion of
the nobles
and burgh-
ers.

In the constitution of society a change begins to be observable in comparison with the political consequences of which all others of the period seem of trivial moment, yet, like most other great and abiding changes, its progress and completion are assignable to no circumscribed period of time. This was nothing less than the permanent fusion of the nobles and the people. Hitherto there had been but little in common between the hereditary landowners and the commercial middle class. Their intermingling in particular localities under party names and symbols had been transient, and unproductive of any solid or enduring fruit. From faction, as from the wild olive-tree, will no pure or nutritious

³³ Grotius, Reb. Belg. I. 12.

produce come ; and degenerating, as the old feud of the Hooks and Kabeljauws speedily did, into mere personal and hereditary squabbles, whatever of reason once inspired the hostile parties soon died away. The actuating causes, which had, in the fourteenth century, marshalled an oppressed populace against lawless feudalism, no longer existed. Centralised authority had effectually crushed all minor extortions and violences. The lords of the soil had imperceptibly passed from the turbulent heads of clans into proprietors of land to let for rent in money, labour, or kind. Private war no longer wasted the fields of the husbandman or the wealth of the burgher. The nobles had not ceased to be powerful, but they had ceased to be formidable. Something of the thrift and prudence which they beheld in the citizen-class was unconsciously inhaled from the common atmosphere of industry. Intermarriages, friendships, money dealings, tended to bring the rich of the city and the noble of the country into a state of social approximation whereof their forefathers had not dreamed ; and their more frequent meeting in the convocations of the provincial legislatures and the States-General, contributed to political results of a similar nature.³⁴

Much was still wanting, for as yet there was no powerful or enduring sympathy to bind the two great elements of society together. Their interests appeared sometimes in unison, sometimes the

Material
interests
and moral
ties.

³⁴ Guicciardini, Tom. I. p. 56.

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contrary; but it is a stupid, as well as mean, error to suppose that the developement of national character and progress is traceable to mere coincidences of what men term their interests, as contradistinguished from their beliefs or feelings. If calculation is the only wise or safe guide, and realisable profit to each generation the only question of policy, it were as well to clear the path of utilitarian legislation by committing all past history to the flames; for history can furnish no example of national greatness or prosperity compassed by the sordid system. Of modern nations, the Dutch have probably been at all times the most sagacious in discerning their material interests and the most persevering in their efforts to advance them. But the history of Holland is no mere sum of fiscal arithmetic. Merchants, manufacturers, ship-builders, ship-masters, owners of land, occupants of land—how could these, *as such*, make a nation? Not by any means whatsoever. Without some moral tie as men, independent of these accidents of pursuit and station,—cohesion, union, identity in any national sense, had been impossible.

Religious
sympathy.

This bond of sympathy the varied orders of society and the dissimilar inhabitants of many provinces were now destined to draw from the fountain of the first sorrow they had ever in common known. What neither exaction nor neglect on the part of their rulers, nor the sense of political or commercial injury, could effect, the common feeling of religious wrong slowly, but steadily, wrought in the minds of

all. Over-taxation was a question of amount, the evils of war a matter of time; the burdens that dismayed the industry of some were haughtily and silently borne by others; and a large class of the community felt comparatively little of their pressure. But every man in a devout and earnest land felt that he had an everlasting soul to lose or save, and that for each there was but one right way among many paths, on the peril of self-condemnation and the death to come, diligently to be sought for and followed. Compromise and concession on all or any other matter were feasible, but how could the exercise of this right be compromised? Here, then, at last, a common cause of apprehension, when the government, inspired more perhaps by political than sectarian motives, undertook to dictate to the consciences of its subjects, and attempted to enforce uniformity of faith. The right of individual judgment, the sense of each one's eternal weal or woe, were alike menaced. Noble and tenant, magistrate and burgher, rich and poor, all were involved in the same danger; and though widely differing among themselves in opinions, and too much disposed to mutual intolerance, they had yet a common cause of fear and hatred of the apparently irresistible power which threatened to reduce by force all religious creeds to its own standard.³⁵

The greater part of Charles's reign may be said to have been a prolonged altercation with his sub-

Reign of
Charles V.

³⁵ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 1.

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jects on matters of faith and matters of finance. So early as 1529, the entire of Utrecht, Holland, and Zeeland, were suspected of heretical opinions, and an edict, in conformity with the resolutions of the Diet of the Empire, was promulgated, whereby the profession of the new doctrines was declared to be felony, of which if a man were found guilty he should be beheaded, and if a woman were convicted she should be buried alive. But the local magistracy, to whom the execution of this measure was intrusted, were little disposed to aid the government in the work of persecution; and when an attempt was made to remove the causes for trial to Louvain, where the high court of ecclesiastical and royal jurisdiction was established, senates of Delft, Amsterdam, and other cities, pleaded the right *de non evocando*, and for a time thus warded off the blow.³⁶ The Emperor, with whom political ambition at all times outweighed his regard for the Church, found it his interest to court the alliance of the Protestant princes of Germany; and thus no very vigorous means were put in force in the Netherlands for the suppression of dissent for several years.

Spread of
the Reform-
ation.

Meanwhile the doctrines of Luther gained fast hold of the popular mind; and though the higher nobility and wealthier families in the towns continued Catholics, a large proportion of the working population of the commercial classes and of the landed gentry had become warmly attached to the

³⁶ Davies, Vol. I. p. 383.

principles of the Reformation.³⁷ With a view to arrest the progress of this alienation, a strict censure-
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 ship of the press was established in 1545, and an edict forbade any person to open a school in any part of the Netherlands without the license of the Emperor or the clergyman of the parish where it was to be situated.³⁸ But these restrictions came too late. By what expedients they were evaded we are not clearly informed; but how little effect was produced by them is evidenced by the tone of exasperation and cruelty which characterises the later decrees, and the triumphant fortitude wherewith the nation prepared to meet them.

It was in the spring of 1550 that, for the more effectual enforcement of the renewed edicts against heresy, the Inquisition was formally established. Proclamations were issued, forbidding any person to attend meetings for private worship, and offering half the property of those who were convicted of doing so to the informers. All Jews were warned to quit the realm on pain of death; and a curious variety of cruel provisions was added for the discovery and punishment of non-conformity, identical in spirit, and in many instances in terms,³⁹ with the penal code, which two centuries later disgraced the statute-book of our own land.

The continual wars in which Charles was engaged led to incessant demands on the Netherlanders for supplies. Duties on various articles of

³⁷ Davies, Vol. I. pp. 446, 454.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 444.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 459.

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import and export, and taxes on income, whether arising from mercantile profits or from fixed property, were imposed by the States, sometimes with limitation as to their duration, sometimes with regard to the purposes to which they were to be applied, neither of which were very scrupulously observed by the needy and exacting government. In 1549 a supply was voted by Zealand and Holland for the equipment of a squadron to be employed in protecting their fishing vessels and merchantmen; but the imperial administration forgot to apply the money to the purpose for which it had been raised, and the Dutch were in the end obliged to fit out a squadron for themselves.⁴⁰

Abdication
of Charles V

Wearied at length with the cares and anxieties of empire, and inspired by feelings which, after all that has been said of them, still remain a mystery, Charles resolved to resign the sceptre of the Netherlands, Spain, and the Indies, into the hands of his precocious and unpopular son.

26th Oct.
1555.

To commemorate this devolution of authority, a medal was struck having the effigy of Philip, and upon the obverse a figure representing his father as Atlas about to lay down his load, with the inscription, "That Atlas may at length have repose."⁴¹ And Philip, at the age of twenty-eight, assumed the reins of rule. A medal still exists, which strangely calls to mind, after three centuries of disappointment and gradual dissolution of the mighty empire

⁴⁰ Davies, Vol. I. p. 460.

⁴¹ Leclerc, Explication His-

toriques des Médailles des Provinces Unies, No. VI.

of Charles, how exulting were the hopes suggested by the precocious talents of his son. It was struck soon after Philip's first initiation into the business of state, for which he was supposed to manifest a singularly mature aptitude; and its inscription bid men look upon the features of "*Philip of Austria, the Emperor's son—a new hope of the country—the love and joy of the human race!*"⁴² How mournful and reproachful sound these words, dictated by adulation and remembered only in mockery! Nor was flattery's promises exhausted during the youth of the King. On the reverse of the large medal issued at his coronation, "*Philip the Invincible*" is represented as Apollo reining in the four horses who drew his chariot of the air; and the audacious motto is appended, "Now will he give light to all the earth."⁴³

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XI.
A.D. 1551.

The first act of Philip's reign, which excited general dissatisfaction, was the attempt to increase the number of bishoprics in the Netherlands. It was believed that the project was partly with a view to increase the number in the States upon whose votes the King could rely in support of the laws against nonconformity. Even under Charles, these had provoked sentiments of disgust and hatred among men of all ranks and among the laity of all persuasions. Many of the Catholic nobles were foremost in deprecating the proceedings of the Inquisition, by whose decrees a great number had already suf-

Creation of
additional
bishoprics.

⁴² Leclerc, No. IV.

⁴³ Ibid. No. VII.

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XI.Religious
severities.Mutual in-
tolerance.

ferred in property, liberty, and life; and when new power was now claimed for the church and crown, the feelings, long smothered by habit, prudence, or fear, broke forth in loud and bitter murmurs.⁴⁴

But to the gloomy and imperious spirit of Philip disaffection served but as a provocative to more inflexible perseverance in severity; and his pride as a sovereign combined with his tenacity as a bigot to disregard the voice of remonstrance and of warning. Notwithstanding all that had been done in his father's time, the doctrines of Luther and Calvin obviously gained ground. Their triumph would be all the more intolerable, therefore, and more rigorous expedients must be adopted. Philip and his ill advisers thought that "so great an evil demanded no less powerful remedies than those which were consequently applied;"⁴⁵ and what those remedies were are but too well known. Espionage, imprisonment, torture, confiscation, and death, reigned throughout the land.

To underrate the force of mutual intolerance that tinged so deeply the entire course of the memorable struggle would be an obvious error. Doubtless the enthusiasm of a simple and novel faith struggling with the reverence equally sincere for long-established ways of practice and of doctrine, steeled many a brave and noble nature to deeds from which, under other circumstances, it would have recoiled. Doubtless many a bosom, too,

⁴⁴ Davies, Vol. I. p. 499.⁴⁵ Bentivoglio, Part I. Book 2.

mourned unfeignedly the hard necessity which a fanatical misconception of duty imposed of stifling those sentiments of pity and forbearance that heretofore adorned and blessed it. All European history of the period is charged with ferocious passion. No realm, no rank, no calling, no church, escaped the fell contagion. Intolerance was almost everywhere retaliated by intolerance, and cruelty by "no quarter." In such a strife, to say that every atrocity was dictated or designed by those in authority, is as absurd as to imagine that men in power can trample down public right and resort to public violence without practically letting loose innumerable evils and provoking the perpetration of countless crimes never contemplated or foreseen. The painter of civil war will seldom err who holds by each dark act of guilt or misery a mirror wherein its counterpart may be seen reflected. Those whom zeal or party blind will not have it so; their hypothesis does not afford "another side." But see it or not, another side there was, undoubtedly, in all religious wars; and however dissimilar in details, history is compelled, for the most part, to declare that such as the provocation hath been, so is that which hath been provoked.

And if the chronicles of Philip's reign detailed no horrors or excesses save those of the oppressor, they would not be believeable. Not all who were, by habits of loyalty or sympathy in creed, ranged on the King's side, were the advocates of persecution. Many a good Catholic shuddered at the threats of Alva, and

Retaliation.

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XI.

protested against the jurisdiction and the judgments of the "Council of Troubles."⁴⁶ In several of the Belgian provinces these feelings influenced a large majority both of the nobles and the people to make common cause with their Dutch kinsmen, and to brave many sufferings and trials with a fortitude entitled to the higher praise, as it was inspired by no intense enthusiasm, but a calm sense of humanity and right. On the other hand, it is not surprising that where to a sense of terrible and unmerited wrong were added the zeal of an intense belief, and the persuasion that all who warred with it were the undoubted enemies of Heaven, a degree of fanaticism was kindled, incapable of discrimination, justice, or mercy. "There were Protestants in Holland at that time who rivalled their foes in cruelty. Sonoy, governor of Friezland, had shewn activity, patriotism, and hardihood, but he made arbitrary use of his authority, persecuting Catholics, and superseding the established courts of justice, he erected a new tribunal, which from its cruelties was called the *blood-raad*, or inquisition."⁴⁷ As the conflict deepened, the excesses of the popular party increased; and in the wild cry of vengeance and pitiless onslaught of the "Water-Gueux," we seem to hear the truest and fearfulest response to the threats and vows of oppression.

Different
causes of
disaffection.

Nevertheless, we must remember, that beside this furious altercation of creeds, and, in some de-

⁴⁶ Bentivoglio, Part I. Book 3.

⁴⁷ Crowe, Lives of Eminent For. Statesmen, Vol. I. p. 156.

gree, wholly independent of it, there were many and grave causes of quarrel between king and people. It should not be forgotten that in the original revolt Catholics and Protestants combined. A common sense of wrong had alienated both from their allegiance, and in the first instance "it is evident that the war was entered into for the defence of the common liberty and privileges of the country."⁴⁸ Of these the principal which had been violated were the right of self-taxation and the right of native-born or adopted subjects of the Netherlands to be appointed to offices of trust and emolument. It was not without apprehension on this score that the Dutch transferred their allegiance from the monarch under whom they had for five-and-thirty years struggled and murmured, but in the main likewise eminently prospered,⁴⁹ to his ill-omened son. Charles was a Netherlander, Philip was a Spaniard, and so ignorant of their language that at his inauguration he was obliged to address the States by deputy. His character for morose and unyielding bigotry was already but too well known, and the discernment of his father inspired no doubt the parting admonition to treat his subjects with forbearance, and to beware of placing strangers over them. Philip swore at his accession to observe all the privileges, whether of judicature or taxation, which the Provinces enjoyed; and renewed the promise given by his father that no office in Holland, save that of stadtholder, should be conferred on a

⁴⁸ Batavia Illustrata, p. 21.⁴⁹ Guicciardini, Tom. II. p. 94.

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foreigner or even on a Netherlander of any other province where Hollanders were not possessed of corresponding functions.⁵⁰ But Philip, who had little acquaintance, and still less sympathy, with his frank and joyous subjects of the Low Countries, surrounded himself almost exclusively with his own countrymen, whose unpopularity he contributed to create and in turn was doomed to share. Several posts of importance, in disregard of usage, policy, and the King's inaugural pledge, were conferred on Spaniards.

Withdrawal
of the court
to Spain.

Unlike his father Philip resolved to fix his residence permanently in Spain. The Netherlanders had no cause to love their king, yet they resented his absence, and there cannot be a doubt that it hastened their alienation. Should they never see a court again? If so, it were hard to pay large taxes for its maintenance in another land. Which reflection of theirs was not by any means philosophical or sound. Perhaps not; but its value as an item in the sum of events is not to be disregarded therefore; and, after all, the mass of men probably will at heart always reason as the Netherlanders did, that if they are to contribute to the splendours of royalty, they ought not to be deliberately excluded from the sight of them, and that the system of rule cannot be sound which interposes a permanent bar to all personal observation and intercourse between the monarch and the people.

The
Duchess of
Parma vice-
roy.

But Philip cared for none of these things. His

⁵⁰ Davies, Vol. I. p. 483.

choice of a viceroy was, indeed, not ill advised, for Margaret of Parma was a woman of rare endowments, courage, and address. When allowed to act on her own sound judgment, she sought the advancement of commerce and industry ; she encouraged men of art and letters where she could ; and some of the best public measures of the time are ascribed to her personal sagacity and diplomatic skill.⁵¹ In a season of growing discontent it is hardly possible to measure the influence which the individual character of a viceroy exercises. Of all stations it is that where moral ascendancy is most indispensable to success or safety. The viceroy, whose errors or whose weakness compel him to remind men of the powers delegated to him in order to maintain his authority, has ceased to be fit for his function. He is leaning on the sceptre for support, not upholding it for the King. His best efforts thenceforth are but measures of police or war. He is confessedly thenceforth on trial for his political life, not a governor, a vice-regent, an admitted power.

On Philip's withdrawal to Spain the viceroyalty was conferred on the Duchess of Parma ; but the real powers of administration were intrusted to Granvelle, who had long enjoyed the unreserved confidence of the King, and in whom the dignities of chief secretary of state and Archbishop of Malines were now combined. The character of Granvelle has been sketched by his celebrated contemporary and brother cardinal with his accustomed

⁵¹ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 1.

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XI.

skill: "He was a man who had been trained in the cabinet of the late emperor to govern by arbitrary power rather than according to law; he had passed from the service of the father to that of the son, and was employed in the like affairs with similar authority; he was left to be an arbiter and director to the council of the Duchess of Parma, but he knew not how to moderate the power which had been given to him, and being of a choleric and overbearing temper, he plumed himself on the appearance of being superior to all the world, taking little heed of the envy and hatred he provoked or the resistance he might have to encounter."⁵² In the hands of such a man the executive would have become at any time sufficiently unpopular; but when to the offensiveness of his haughty and supercilious demeanour to the native noblesse was added the imputation of advising the edicts against liberty of conscience and the enforcement of the penalties their violation caused, the odium in which the minister was held became universal. The complaint grew loud that Granvelle "had not the least regard for the privileges of the country."⁵³

A liberal
ministry.
A.D. 1563.

After two years' unavailing struggle with the suspicion of the States, the jealousy of the nobles, and the disaffection of the people, Granvelle retired, and the hope of national tranquillity revived when the Prince of Orange, the Count of Egmont, and other nobles of the patriot party, became the ostensible advisers of the Viceroy. William of Nassau

⁵² Bentiviglio, Part I. book 2.

⁵³ Batavia Illust. Part I. § 1.

had been a favourite with the late Emperor and had been admitted to his peculiar confidence for many years. Yet, notwithstanding his profession of catholicism and abstinence from all public approval of the measures of the popular party, he had failed to disarm the distrust wherewith Philip regarded him; and so undisguised was this feeling that his appointment to the local and subordinate trust of stadtholder of the province of Holland in 1559, had hardly been expected, and his subsequent admission to the Viceregal Council of State was viewed with wonder and joy.⁵⁴

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The aim of the court appears to have been rather to break the opposition by calling on such men to advise than to adopt their counsels. They foresaw that their selection would give rise to jealousy, their alliance with the old staff of oppression to suspicion, and their acquiescence in even modified measures of severity to popular blame. What Orange himself expected from it we know not. Did he hope to bring the government by degrees to milder ways of rule? or believe that he was himself beginning to be felt indispensable? We cannot tell; but we may easily imagine how open to misconstruction his intentions were, and how naturally popular censure must have fallen on his continuance in office while in essentials the system of government was unchanged. Of his expostulations and warnings the multitude heard nothing. They only heard the intermittent cry

Insincerity
of the court.

⁵⁴ Mémoires de Prince d'Orange, p. 37.

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XI.

of suffering, and as they flocked around the scaffold of the victims for conscience sake, thought that those of the aristocracy had taken "the wiser and honester part (of whatever religion they were) who saw the snare and shunned it," and they muttered that "some were content to wear fetters so they might be of gold and they might help to make them."⁵⁵ William could afford better than many others of his order to treat with disdain the imputation of sordid motives; but there was too much justice in the reproaches wherewith he was assailed, for continuing to lend the sanction of his name to the administration, after the receipt of the commission sent by the king from Spain, by which new and more extended powers were given for the apprehension and imprisonment, without any form of trial, of persons suspected of heresy, or who should read forbidden books.⁵⁶

11th May,
1565.

The Com-
promise.

On the publication of the royal edicts the exasperation of the people could with difficulty be controlled. Placards denouncing the government covered the town walls, and songs and pamphlets, couched in the most exciting terms, were circulated every where.⁵⁷ Persons of rank and property attached to the popular cause became alarmed, and in the hope of averting the danger of a general outbreak by leading public opinion, framed the celebrated confederacy which, from the moderation of

⁵⁵ Hexam, *Tongue Combat*,
p. 10.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 19; Bentivoglio,
Part I. book 2.

⁵⁷ Davies, Vol. I. p. 520.

its demands, was currently known by the title of CHAP.
XI. "The Compromise." It was signed by upwards of four hundred of the principal nobility and merchants of the Seventeen Provinces, Catholics as well as Protestants, who bound themselves by oath to oppose by every lawful means the establishment of the Inquisition under what name or pretext soever; to support and aid one another as devoted friends and brothers; and if any of them were troubled or impeached on account of this alliance to devote their lives and properties to their defence.⁵⁸ Egmont and Orange not only refused to sign the confederacy, but privately gave warning to the court; but Count Louis of Nassau, the Count of Culemborg, and Count Henry XXI. of Brederode, at the head of a great number of their associates, assembling at Brussels presented the National Remonstrance to the Viceroy.⁵⁹

5th April,
1566.

Unwilling to excite a commotion among the The Gueux people by attending the viceregal court with their ordinary retinues, the confederates had resolved to go up together on foot with their petition of right. As they approached, the Lord of Barlaincourt, one of the Spanish party, had the imprudence to exclaim that "there could be nothing to fear from a troop of *gueux*," or beggars. The fatal words passed from lip to lip until they reached the crowd; and when, almost in the same hour, it became known that the Duchess of Parma had declared her inability

⁵⁸ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 1; Grotius, Lib. I. p. 19.

⁵⁹ Leclerc, Explic. des Médailles, No. XXVIII.

CHAP. XI. to concede even a suspension of the penal decrees, the cup of bitterness, already at the brim, overflowed. "Beggars?—then as beggars let us be!" The grey garb of mendicants became a party uniform. Every where trade was interrupted or relinquished. The taxes were no longer paid. Wild speculation and rash talk was on all sides: "*Vivent les Gueux!*" and the first scenes of anarchy began. The government began to lay in stores of arms; the beggars did the same.⁶⁰

Duplicity of Philip.

A.D. 1566.

The Duchess of Parma is believed to have withstood violent measures in council on more than one occasion; and the impression would appear to be in some degree justified by the curious device on one of the medals struck during her government—a Belgic lion crushed beneath a huge press, of which opposite parties are turning the screw; and the significant legend, "What can be gained by provoking this noble lion once more into fury?"⁶¹ But numismatic conceits are seldom more faithworthy exponents of the true intentions of those in power than their formal professions of amity or forbearance.⁶² No variance from the truth was deemed impolitic if it tended for the hour to deceive, or dishonourable if employed for the attainment of ends in themselves regarded as legitimate. At the moment when Philip, incensed at the pertinacity of the Netherlanders in adhering to their oft-repeated

⁶⁰ Davies, Vol. I. pp. 522-530.

⁶² Bentivoglio, Part I. book 3.

⁶¹ Leclerc, No. XVII.

claims of right, was preparing a vast army under Alva "for their chastisement," he wrote to the Viceroy that "appearances must be kept up, and a desire exhibited to accommodate differences until she should find herself in possession of an adequate force, and that then it should be used unsparingly."⁶³ CHAP.
XI.

The excesses which were every where committed by the populace, and the consequent subversion of law and order, were attributed by the government to the instigation of the confederacy, from whose Remonstrance all the open disorders were said to date. Yet popular resistance had been thoroughly crushed, the public teaching of the Reformers relinquished, and their places of worship closed or pulled down, when it became known that the Duke of Alva, at the head of 20,000 Spanish troops, was on his way to the Netherlands to execute the vengeance of the King. Earnestly the Viceroy remonstrated against this long-threatened measure as unwise and now unnecessary; and piteously the nobles and people deprecated Philip's wrath. In May 1567 Alva entered Brussels and quartered his soldiery in the principal towns. One of his first acts was the establishment, by royal commission, of a new court of supreme and unlimited jurisdiction, before which all who had, either on political or sectarian grounds, incurred suspicion, were summoned, and by whose summary sentences confiscation, imprisonment, and

⁶³ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 2.

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XI.

death, were dealt out with unsparing cruelty. During the five dreadful years of Alva's administration, many thousands perished by "The Council of Troubles," neither creed nor station availing aught against its irresponsible decrees. The Count of Egmont, who was a Catholic, and the Count of Hoorn, who was a Protestant, fell on the same scaffold, and for the same pretended treason; and eighteen others of the like rank were executed about the same time. The Prince of Orange and the Count of Brederode saved themselves by flight, and their example was followed by great numbers of the landed proprietary and wealthy merchants.⁶⁴ As the atrocities of each day added to the sense of terror and despair, the number of fugitives increased; and it has been generally computed that not less than 100,000 persons abandoned their native land during the period in question. Outlawry and confiscation followed as matters of course, and the loss and injury done to trade was aggravated by the emigration of the most skilful artisans of every kind, more especially those engaged in the woollen manufacture. Some of these found refuge in England; and the industry of Norwich, Sandwich, Maidstone, Colchester, and Southampton, received a valuable stimulus from the Dutch and Belgian exiles.⁶⁵

The Water.
Gueux.

During four years the Provinces lay prostrate at the feet of Alva without an effort, or apparently a

⁶⁴ Grotius, De Reb. Belg. Lib. I. p. 26.

⁶⁵ Smith, Mem. of Wool, ch. 22.

hope of deliverance. Two ill-concerted attempts at invasion, headed by Orange and his brother, failed to enlist any considerable number of the population in their support; and after their defeat, the sagacious counsel of Coligny (the Huguenot admiral of France), with whom a secret correspondence was maintained, led to more attention being turned to the means of resistance and retaliation which the habits of the Dutch afforded them by sea. Privateers were equipped and manned; ⁶⁶ they made easy prizes of the Spanish merchantmen; but, being wholly uncontrolled and undirected, they frequently mistook friends for foes, and speedily began to inspire general apprehension. The Kings of Denmark and Sweden refused them leave to anchor in their ports, and Elizabeth of England, at the request of the Spanish minister, forbade her subjects, under any circumstances, to afford them food or shelter.⁶⁷ Thus outlawed, the Water-Gueux, as they were called, must either have dispersed or become mere pirates had not a new aspect been given to affairs by the infatuated tyranny of Alva.

Hitherto no attempt had been made to levy taxes without the assent of the States. When it was proposed in 1570 that, besides the Hundredth, or general tax of one per cent on property, a tenth should be levied on all sales and transfers, so great was the opposition raised in the provincial legislatures, and more especially in that of Utrecht, where

Taxes without consent.

⁶⁶ Grotius, De Reb. Belg. Lib. II. p. 35.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

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XI.

the clergy constituted the upper house, that the project was abandoned and a million of guilders voted as a supply for two years. At the expiration of that term Alva renewed his demand of the tenth, and being refused, he declared his intention of levying the tax by the authority of the crown. All classes shared in the indignation this proceeding caused, and none were louder in their invectives than the Franciscan monks, who denounced the Viceroy "from the pulpit as a tyrant and violater of the people's rights."⁶⁸ The States of Holland passed a solemn vote of censure, and the more experienced members of the government advised a compromise. But the endurance of the people had rendered Alva incredulous and unfearful, and when by tacit compact they resolved passively to resist, shutting their shops and stopping their bakeries, breweries, and mills, seventy of the most reputable citizens of Brussels were seized and condemned to death.⁶⁹ The gibbet was actually prepared for their execution when the news arrived that the town of Briel had been taken by the Water-Gueux. The victims were hastily liberated and the tax abandoned; but it was now too late, and the civil war began.

A.D. 1574.

Enraged at the growing prowess and daring of the Zealand fleet, Philip prepared a vast armada in the ports of Spain for its annihilation. A special envoy was despatched to the Queen of England requesting permission for the Spanish ships to an-

⁶⁸ Davies, Vol. I. p. 578.

⁶⁹ Grotius, De Reb. Belg. Lib. II. p. 34.

chor in the south-eastern ports of her kingdom. Almost at the same juncture an embassy arrived from Holland imploring help. Elizabeth refused both requests, from a complication of motives whose worthiness or wisdom it is needless to examine. The Zealanders were left to prepare their defence unaided and alone.⁷⁰

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The enthusiasm of rich and poor was roused by the overwhelming sense of danger. Large sums were voluntarily placed at the public disposal to equip vessels of war; and the fishermen refrained from their customary occupations, lest they might be detained by contrary winds at a distance from land, and, being surprised by the enemy, should be compelled to pilot them through the difficult shallows of their threatened coast. To guard against the want, the Viceroy had actually sent fifty native pilots beforehand to Spain; but nearly every one of them contrived to make his escape from the hated service. Meanwhile Philip sullenly pursued his preparations; and at length three hundred vessels, fully equipped and carrying 15,000 troops, lay ready to put to sea. But while their sails flapped idly on the Biscayan shore, a king more terrible than their master, had countermanded their goings forth by an unlooked-for messenger. The Angel of Death passed through that confident host, and ere many weeks elapsed their admiral and more than half

Armada
against
Zealand.

⁷⁰ Davies, Vol. II. p. 7.

CHAP. XI. their multitudinous array had perished of the plague. Philip was compelled to abandon the enterprise, and the Zealanders were saved a sanguinary struggle.⁷¹

Negotiations.

After three years had been consumed in civil war, the once prolific provinces were wasted, the cities impoverished, and the population decimated by the sword and famine. Both sides longed for an end of such disasters,—the court of Spain that its humiliations and vain expenditure of troops and treasure might cease,—the States that, while yet they were sufficiently formidable to exact fair terms, the opportunity should not be lost of securing liberty of conscience and local self-rule. Beholding, as they were compelled to do, day by day, the sufferings of the multitude, and too well aware how well-nigh exhausted the resources of the country in general were, the best men amongst them—men like Barneveldt, Paul Buys, Maalsen, and St. Aldegonde, trembled lest the fortitude of the people at length should fail, and that all they had so bravely endured should have been borne in vain. At the instance of the Emperor Maximilian, whose temper disposed him towards liberal views,⁷² and whose realm, already much divided in religious opinion, “was rather too near the blaze of the Netherlands,”⁷³ negotiations were opened, and commissioners empowered to treat met at Breda. At the

March 1575

⁷¹ Davies, Vol. II. p. 7.

⁷² Hallam, Vol. I. p. 161, note.

⁷³ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 2.

outset, however, the Royalist envoys refused to negotiate on behalf of their master, unless the States submitted their proposals in the form of a petition.⁷⁴ Strange as it now appears to us, they hesitated not to comply. In terms nothing could be more loyal or submissive than their appeal.⁷⁵ They wished heartily to have peace, and would not stickle about phrases or forms. They were men of business, and habits taught them to keep hold on the substance of things, and to take small note of conventionalities. They were disinterested men, few of whom had much to gain, and most of whom had much to lose, by revolution. They were practical men, who had turned rebels upon no wild theory or hope of perfection, but sorely against their will and in prosaic self-defence. No fumes of rhetoric had giddied their brain, nor did the pulse of their courage fluctuate with the inhalation of its enervating stimulus. Above all, they were brave men, and therefore sickened at the exposure of helpless age, and guiltless infancy, and feeble womanhood, to the horrors of civil war. They were no vain amateurs in rebellion, but sober-minded men, who would have deemed theatrical airs of glory beneath them; they were simply and truly brave, and consequently they were spared the necessity of talking lightly and loudly of bloodshed to keep their courage up. Without effort or equivocation, therefore, they agreed to humour the ex-

CHAP.
XI.⁷⁴ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 2.⁷⁵ Ibid.

CHAP. XI. acting temper of Philip, and to approach him as petitioners once more,—only too happy if their hard antagonist were propitiated thereby, for, as was said of the founders of Swiss liberty,—“Utility was their bond, and not respects.”⁷⁶

Firmness of
the Dutch.

But exactly in proportion to their pliancy in forms were the States firm in demanding guarantees for the sacred rights whose infraction had driven them to take arms.⁷⁷ They were ready to swear allegiance to the King and his heirs for ever; but they would worship God in the way their consciences approved, and in none other. Their other chief demands were an amnesty, the withdrawal of foreign troops, and a recognition of the power and permanence of their local assemblies and magistrates.⁷⁸ Some stipulations were annexed regarding the disposition of certain garrisons that seem inconsistent with the general tone of the rest; but the issue did not turn on these, and we may doubt whether, if it had, they would have been insisted on. The reply of the Spanish government is a perfect epitome of the principles that then were recognised in almost every kingdom of Europe — Austria perhaps excepted.⁷⁹ The amnesty was conceded, and no difficulty was raised as to municipal rights; but the creed of the crown should “be established universally, and no other should be tolerated; howbeit, the King, to shew his clemency and loving-kindness, would suffer those who belonged to other

⁷⁶ Bacon.

⁷⁷ Le Clerc, Hist. Vol. I. p. 43.

⁷⁸ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 9.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

sects to emigrate without hindrance, and he would give them time to sell their property, the value of which they might take with them." No wonder that the reply of the Dutch envoys to these terms manifested a spirit so repugnant to that which they betrayed as to lead to the expectation of the conference being speedily brought to a close. "They held fast to their first principles," telling the commissioners of the King, that if he "wished to heal the wounds of the Provinces he must take counsel of those that knew them best, and could advise him therefore most speedily to a cure; that their religion seemed to them a good one, and that they would not quit their native land for the liberty of its exercise."⁸⁰ A long argumentative rejoinder from the royal envoys followed, wherein no tangible concession was offered; and, as touching ecclesiastical affairs, "the King would not bate the least" of what had been already set forth. After reference to the States, and due deliberation, the delegates of Holland declared, "that they stood firm to the conditions propounded already by them concerning peace,—that they believed them indispensable, and that, consequently, they could not adopt any other basis of an accommodation."⁸¹

Count Schwartzenberg, who had been present as a mediator on the part of the Emperor, withdrew "in considerable discontent with the Spanish party;"⁸² and, on the intelligence that the Vice-

Result of
the negotia-
tion.

⁸⁰ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 9.

⁸² Davies, Vol. II. p. 18.

⁸¹ Ibid.

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XI.

From March
to November,
1575.

roy was preparing a new flotilla against Zealand, the States declared that faith had been broken, and the conference was brought to an end. But, though fruitless of immediate results, it was far from destitute of important consequences. At Breda, for the first time, the merchant-statesmen of Holland had in diplomacy met face to face with the accomplished ministers of Spain. In the protracted discussions that ensued, and the elaborate documents that were interchanged, an infinite variety of topics was involved, many complications of policy, and not a few questions of international law. The eyes of Europe were upon them ; on all hands it was felt that more than any cared to utter was at stake. It was of the last importance that, not only through no error of inaptitude or passion should the interests of their fellow-citizens be compromised, but that, in their tone and bearing, they should leave on friends and foes the inestimable impression of their competency to deal as equals and co-ordinates with the ancient potentates of the world. True, indeed, that as yet they claimed not such equality of nationhood,—that in political etiquette they were still the vassals of Philip, lord of Spain and the Indies. But the day drew nigh when other destinies awaited them ; and, to be prepared to fill the great part cast for them, many things were beforehand needful,—these among the rest, that they should beseem the character of accomplished, enlightened, thoughtful, and determined men,—still more, that they should acquire the sense

of self-adequacy in the difficult diversities of their political position. How far these impressions were formed or strengthened by the negotiations of Breda subsequent events most appropriately explain. We trace, henceforth, a more regardful air in surrounding nations,—a more matured, and perhaps a less deprecatory, tone in the Dutch themselves. The lessons of their long apprenticeship began to tell. They began to feel that it was time that apprenticeship should cease.

In other respects, also, the issue of the conference gave a perceptible impulse to the revolution. Open refusals of further contributions to support the royal troops arose in Guelderland, and other provinces,⁸³ hitherto patient of exaction, and neutral, if not deserving the reproach of indifference. At the next assemblage of the States-General at Brussels, wherein the Belgian provinces were represented, instead of granting subsidies they occupied themselves in framing a remonstrance, at the instance of Richardot, bishop of Arras, the purport of which was, while protesting their attachment to the King and the Catholic faith, to urge the withdrawal of foreign troops, the bestowal of all offices on natives of the country, and the formation of a council of Netherlandersmen in Spain to advise the crown on all Netherland affairs. “God deliver us from States-General!” cried the Viceroy, when, instead of a supply, he received this singular pro-

Remon-
strance of
the States-
General.

⁸³ Davies, Vol. II. p. 18.

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XI.

duction. He succeeded, however, in inducing Brabant and Flanders to raise loans for the prosecution of the war. Between the Dutch and Belgian provinces no identity of purpose was possible. But the active presence of discontent in the Catholic states, crippling as it did the power of the government, rendered good service to their Protestant neighbours.

Sale of the
crown and
church
lands.

In these the evidence of a bolder and broader policy became clearly discernible. Standing in urgent need of public funds for defence, and fearing the effect of reiterated assessments on the straitened means of the people, the States of Holland put up to sale the crown and ecclesiastical lands, and gave a guarantee that there should no peace be treated for, that did not confirm the purchases that might be made. A step like this indicated a change of feeling, such as we can hardly realise the extent of. Accustomed to see without marvel alienations of property of a similar kind, we are apt to forget the immeasurable difference of times and circumstances wherein this act was done. Great must have been the confidence of the legislative assembly of Holland in themselves—greater, if possible, the confidence in them of the people amongst whom in such an age purchasers were found for the seignorial rents and profits of the puissant, vindictive, and as yet the unabjured monarch of the land. Prior to the negotiations of Breda, a proceeding of this kind would not have been attempted; but now even this was but a step to other and more irrevocable measures. Within a few months of the

termination of the conference, St. Aldegonde, Vanderduys, and others, presented their credentials as envoys to the Queen of England, with authority to make her a tender of the sovereignty of Zealand and Holland. A special envoy from De Requesens encountered the Dutch embassy in London, and Elizabeth found it expedient to dissemble with both parties, not being prepared to take a decided part in their quarrel. In 1576 the Belgian states united with the Dutch in solemnly demanding liberty of conscience for all sects and the restoration of ancient privileges. The new viceroy, Don John, at first affected to consent; but, after a brief truce, the struggle was renewed, and continued unintermit-
tently during the seven ensuing years.

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XI.

The enfeebled fortunes of the confederacy were now to sustain a stunning, though not unapprehended, blow from an unworthy hand.⁸⁴ William of Nassau, to whose energy and resolution, more than to that of any other individual, the States were indebted for wise counsels and brave deeds, was doomed to fall in his own palace, in the presence of his wife, and in the midst of his guards, by the bullet of an obscure assassin. For years he had been exposed in the field to the arms of Spain, and during the intervals of peace to the base machinations of her perfidious king.⁸⁵ No implement was too cowardly or cruel for Philip's use; and so thoroughly had his spirit tainted all who

Assassina-
tion of the
Prince of
Orange.

10 July,
1684.

⁸⁴ Aubery, Mémoires, Guillaume, Prince d'Orange.

⁸⁵ De Thou, Liv. LXXIX. Tom. VI. p. 381.

CHAP.
XI.

inhaled its influence, that even Parma is said to have heard unmoved the proposition of Gerard to take off by treachery the illustrious chief of the revolvers. The attempt had several times been made in vain ; it was at last but too successful, and at a moment when its promised fruit of confusion and dismay seemed most ripe for the gathering of vengeance. The link which had ostensibly bound France to the cause of emancipation had recently been severed by the death of the Duke of Anjou. The greater part of Flanders had been repossessed, during the campaign of 1583, by the Spanish troops ; and several of the great towns, weary of the ruinous struggle, had sincerely returned to their allegiance. Local jealousies and religious feuds threatened hourly to lay the northern provinces open to a triumphant foe. Never could a leader so experienced, and so trusted, as William, have been worse spared. His statesmanlike talents, combined as they were with a high military reputation and the lustre of an ancient name, rendered him an invaluable ally of the revolutionary cause.⁸⁶

Character of
William.

Without falling into the almost commendable error of the national grief, in whose tears his glowing epitaph has been written, we can appreciate sufficiently the loss of such a man as William of Nassau at such a time. Stainless chivalry and self-denying patriotism are qualities to which contemplative history denies his claim ; as unfounded is

⁸⁶ De Thou, Hist. Liv. LXXIX. Tom. VI. p. 383

the title sometimes awarded him of being the author of Batavian independence. “In the early period of the disturbances he acted the double part of first abetting the confederacy and then giving information of its existence to the government,—of accepting a command under the Duchess of Parma, and encouraging the lord of Brederode in active hostilities. The capture of Briel, the first blow struck for Netherland liberty, was executed not only without his participation, but excited his serious displeasure, and Holland and Zealand had revolted while he was yet in Germany; nor was it until some time after the States of Holland had assembled at Dort, and taken ample measures for their defence, that the prince came into that province, then in a condition to offer security to his person, almost in the guise of a fugitive. Amid all the subsequent disasters of the Netherlands he never lost sight of his own aggrandisement;”⁸⁷ and when the Duke of Anjou was elected chief of the confederacy by a great majority of the States, William did not scruple to avail himself of his popularity in Holland, Utrecht, and Zealand, to retain the “sovereign power which he had virtually exercised”⁸⁸ for some time in those provinces, although without the assumption of any peculiar title.

To impute the origin of the insurrection, therefore, to his daring, or its sustentation to his disinterested zeal, were to commit the ordinary

CHAP.
XI.

A.D. 1582.

Services
rendered by
William.

⁸⁷ Davies, Vol. II. pp. 149, 150.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 121.

CHAP. XI. mistake of supposing great events the consequence of individual genius, and their occurrence to have been dependent on the propitious guidance of unalloyed heroism and virtue. Not thus is the world moved. Of the leaders as well as of the led the motives are — what shall we say,—strangely and wondrously?—what more than naturally because humanly mingled? This strong man of Nassau did, indeed, bring priceless aid to the Netherlanders—aid with which it is hard for us now to see how, in many seasons of extremity and discomfiture, they could have dispensed—aid that not all their gold could buy, their industry create, or their matchless endurance furnish. In council others gave sometimes subtler advice; in the assembly few were not more eloquent; in the field he was overmatched by the generalship of Parma, and rivalled, if not excelled, by Lamoral.⁸⁹ But, unlike most others, he never sunk under defeat, nor, once his part had finally been chosen, betrayed a doubt of ultimate success. Inconsistent and of unstable, if not of double purpose, while as yet the people were themselves undetermined on the extent of their demands, or the lengths to which they would go for enforcing them, William would fain have withdrawn from public affairs at the approach of the storm; finding that impossible, without openly offending the court, “at odds with himself,” and swayed by contending passions he sometimes seemed to serve the King out

⁸⁹ The Count of Egmont.

of loyal zeal, and at others “to second the unquiet humours.”⁹⁰ He no sooner saw that the people were awakened to the great ends they were destined to accomplish, than his spirit rose in dignity and power. He had thenceforth an adequate aim worth living for—an object capable of filling that silent, deep, expansive bosom—of engrossing all his varied faculties—of elevating and concentrating all those yearning thoughts that, destitute of occupation, had hitherto rendered him the sport of their incoherent influences. From the dawn of independence, and long ere its actual form was popularly seen, his conduct lost all shade of instability or faithlessness. His talents for intrigue and habits of dissimulation were devoted, and were on all hands felt to be devoted wholly, to the extirpation of arbitrary power from his native land. Many as pure and brave as he, and many sincere lovers of local rule and free institutions, had their hours of disheartenment and despondency, when, if not audibly, they revolved the possibility of making reasonable terms, should the worst come.⁹¹ But William had no alternatives. The foreshadow of “the worst” came not over him. He had cherished too long the image of an emancipated land, in which he should be hailed as the chief deliverer, to admit the contingency of being forced to abandon it.

Call such a passion egotism, selfishness, ambition, what you will;—its strength enabled him to

⁹⁰ Bentivoglio, Part I. book 3.

⁹¹ Ibid.

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“support the people when ready to yield to despair.”⁹² His personal ascendancy with the mass of the community became daily more entire. Though grave by natural disposition, and so little given to speech as to have acquired the soubriquet of “the taciturn,” he mingled freely with all classes and degrees; for the highborn his hospitality was ever ready, and the *bourgeois* loved their noblest noble, who would drink of their beer out of the common can.⁹³

Royal honours.

A project for investing him with the insignia, for he was already in possession of the substantial attributes, of the chief magistracy, had long been entertained. It was proposed that he should be created, by the States-General, Count of Holland, and solemnly inaugurated chief or Stadt-holder of the Union with the title of Seigneur. How much of the real spirit of the time is revealed in the popular revival of these feudal epithets! Most of the towns and representatives of the noblesse had assented; Amsterdam and a few other towns hesitated, but it was believed that they also would speedily be brought to concur in the general desire.⁹⁴ While they were wavering, a cry of grief and horror broke over the silent land. Distrust and doubt were summarily ended now; and the spirit of their unanointed lord had passed for ever from the scene of his long and brave life-struggle. Cheated

⁹² Davies, Vol. II. p. 151.

⁹³ Aubery, Mémoires, Guillaume d'Orange, p. 149.

⁹⁴ Kerroux, Abrégé de l'Histoire de la Hollande, Tom. I. pp. 184, 185.

thus at the last of the glittering prize which seemed almost within his grasp, popular feeling, as though it would not be baffled in its love, “consigned his remains to the tomb with royal honours.”⁹⁵ CHAP.
XI.

But there still remained in the councils of the confederates one fully as able, and far more single-minded, and who, by his education, temperament, and station in life, understood and sympathised more thoroughly with the wants and feelings of his countrymen. This was no other than the celebrated pensionary of Holland, John Van Olden Barneveldt. His family had dwelt at Amersfort for upwards of a century; and, “being entitled to have *ridder*, meaning knight or squire, attached to their name, might not erroneously be designated as a kind of burgess-nobility.”⁹⁶ He was brought up to the profession of the law, and had already attained considerable reputation as an advocate when the revolt began. While the majority of his brethren sided (as in similar circumstances elsewhere they have generally done) with the side of authority, Barneveldt fearlessly espoused the cause of justice and freedom. On the approach of the Spanish army in 1572 the president of the high court, and the whole of the bar, with three exceptions, fled from the Hague; and of these Barneveldt was one. He undertook to act as commissary

⁹⁵ De Thou, Hist. Liv. LXXIX. Tom. VI. p. 383.

⁹⁶ Crowe, Lives of Eminent Foreign Statesmen, Vol. I. p. 153.

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to the insurgents, and served for two years under the Prince of Orange, in that and other capacities. When the invaders had for a time been beaten back, he resumed his practice at the Hague, without relinquishing, however, an active participation in public affairs. His popularity increased, and in 1576 he was made pensionary of Rotterdam. He was employed on various embassies and negotiations; and the memorable "Union of Utrecht" is said to have been drawn up by him.⁹⁷

The Union
of Utrecht.

The first attempt at a federal union was that of 1577, which was termed "the Pacification of Ghent," to which both the Dutch and Belgian provinces were parties, and the terms of which, as they implied no renunciation of allegiance to the King, were in semblance ratified by the vice-regal successor of Alva. But Don John had no mind to keep faith with rebels longer than it seemed expedient to do so. In a few months the amnesty was violated, hostilities broke forth afresh, and most of the southern States, weary of the contest, and unsustained by the indomitable self-reliance of their northern kinsmen, despaired of the issue, and made their peace with Spain.⁹⁸ Thus weakened, it was plain that the sole hope of the Dutch now lay in more intimate concert and union than they had ever hitherto known.⁹⁹ But the jealous se-

⁹⁷ He was then but in his twenty-fifth year, having been born 14th Sept. 1547.

⁹⁸ Bentivoglio, Part II. chap. 4.

⁹⁹ Grotius, De Reb. Belg. Lib. III. p. 63.

veralty of each state rendered its accomplishment a matter of no ordinary difficulty. Of those who were intrusted on behalf of Holland with the delicate and important task of preparing a scheme of permanent federation, Barneveldt was one ; and, after long and anxious consultations with the men of worth and judgment in the other provinces, the memorable project of law, or rather of alliance, was subscribed and ratified by all on the 3d of January, 1579.¹⁰⁰

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Each province retained its separate sovereignty,¹⁰¹ and all the rights of self-taxation, judicature, and internal government which had appertained to it before. Save as specifically named, no powers, either legislative or executive, were relinquished ; and the assembly of the States-General was intended rather to serve the purpose of a permanent or periodical congress of delegates than a united legislature. Its members were not merely delegates, yet their powers were strictly defined previous to every session by the government of the states they respectively represented ; and when new or unforeseen questions arose, and in all cases of forming or annulling treaties with foreign powers, reference to each province for formal instructions was rendered obligatory.¹⁰²

Federalism.

Conceiving, however, that without an ostensible sovereign the revolted provinces would never obtain the recognition of foreign powers, they were willing

¹⁰⁰ Grotius, De Reb. Belg. Lib. III. p. 63.

¹⁰¹ Batavia, Illust. Part I. sect. 3.

¹⁰² Temple, chap. 4.

CHAP. XI. to confer the supreme dignity on whoever could bring the greatest assurance of aid. Barneveldt was one of the embassy who made terms with the Duke of Anjou in 1583; and when the incapacity and perfidy of that ill-chosen prince had caused his virtual deposition, the Pensionary of Holland concurred in the policy of tendering the sovereignty to William, and had actually penned the terms on which the offer should be made, when the purpose was baffled by the hand of the assassin.¹⁰³ Once more the sceptre of the Netherlands was placed in the hands of the Queen of England, and this time it was not absolutely rejected.¹⁰⁴

Leicester
Governor-
General.

Elizabeth, who in 1572, at the instance of Spain, had driven the Gueux from her shores, and, yielding to the same influence, had rejected the tender made to her of the sovereignty of Holland three years later, was now disposed to regard the Netherlands with a very different eye. "Beggars" no more, the Dutch had proved themselves formidable and reputable as allies, and hostilities with Philip could no longer be averted. Without assuming, therefore, any of the rights or dignities intended her, she agreed to send a force of six thousand men into the Netherlands under the Earl of Leicester, on condition that he was to be named Governor-General by the States, and that certain towns should be given in pledge for the money that she was willing to advance in support of the war.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Crowe, p. 157.

¹⁰⁴ Camden, p. 440.

¹⁰⁵ Davies, Vol. II. p. 175.

But Leicester soon betrayed the falsity of his position, and the most utter incapacity for serving the cause he had been sent to aid. Placing himself at the head of a violent and fanatical party he attempted to play the dictator and judge in matters of which he knew nothing, and in which his interference was justly reckoned an intrusion and an insult. Barneveldt took a prominent part in resisting his arrogant usurpations; and within two years Elizabeth deemed it prudent to recall him to Eng-
A.D. 1587.
land. About the same time the Queen had opened negotiations for peace with Spain against the urgent remonstrances of the States, who were divided between the apprehensions of being compromised thereby against their will, and of being abandoned to their fate.¹⁰⁶ The negotiations were broken off by the insincerity of Philip, who was already preparing his invasion of England; but they lasted long enough to shew the Dutch how little dependence they could place on the constancy of the Queen.

But there were other causes of distrust, and
Toleration.
incompatibilities of policy, which must have rendered the seemingly feasible project of a regal union with England illusory and abortive. The Dutch, though still far behind those principles of religious tolerance for which they were afterwards nationally known, were already deeply imbued with

¹⁰⁶ Guelderland, Friezland, and Overijssel, were afraid of being left out of the treaty of peace;--

Holland and Zealand of being included in it. The rest were divided in their feelings.

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the sentiment of religious freedom ; and the illustrious men by whom their counsels were chiefly led,—Orange, St. Aldegonde, but above all Barneveldt,¹⁰⁷—were firmly attached, both in theory and practice, to liberty of opinion. Not so the last of the Tudors. To the subtlety of Henry VII. and the impetuous will of his son, Elizabeth added all the love of real power that had made her grandfather a great king, and all the vanity and irritability of despotism which, rather than any feeling of religion, had stained her father's reign with bloodshed for conscience sake. Less influenced by bigotry than her cruel and gloomy sister, Elizabeth's sagacity had perceived the advantages which an ambiguous part might afford her in the difficult circumstances that beset the first years of her reign ; and her power of dissimulation, if it did not enable her to keep alive the hopes of both parties, for a time sufficed in some measure to abate their active hostility.¹⁰⁸ But of liberty of conscience, of speech, or of worship, as individual rights, Elizabeth was as totally regardless as other princes of her house or time. We are too apt to forget, in the crimes of Philip II., Charles IX., and Mary, that the self-same lordship over conscience was arrogated by Elizabeth, and conceded by her abject parliaments, whose acts for many years were but the formal registrations of her imperious will. In her first speech from the throne

25th Jan.
1558.

¹⁰⁷ Crowe, Life of Barneveldt, p. 182.

¹⁰⁸ While the Reformers were led to believe that long previous

to her accession she had abjured the doctrines at Rome, she deemed it expedient to have mass said at her coronation.

she declared that the adoption of new ordinances in the church might have been without consulting them, howbeit, she had chosen rather to take counsel with them.¹⁰⁹ And even the Act of Uniformity she would never have assented to, as she herself told Archbishop Parker, but that it contained a clause empowering her, by her own authority, to ordain and alter rites and ceremonies.¹¹⁰ CHAP.
XI.

What manner of counsel they gave, is but too faithfully recorded in the penal laws that followed one another quickly in succession. Of these the foremost were the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. "Sad were the consequences of these two laws both to the Papists and the Puritans."¹¹¹ The celebration, however privately, of any other ritual than that of the state was made an offence punishable with imprisonment for life; and to attend such ceremonial was visited with proportionate severity.¹¹² "Sir Edward Waldegrave and his lady were sent to the Tower for hearing mass and having a priest in their house; and many others about the same time were punished for the like offence."¹¹³ Such was Statutes of
Supremacy
and Uni-
formity. A.D. 1561. the commencement of the system; its further development soon followed.

For refusing to take the oath of supremacy, whereby the ecclesiastical authority of Rome was abjured, a man became liable to the penalties of The religion
of the
crown.

¹⁰⁹ D'Ewes's Journal, p. 11, fol.

¹¹⁰ Life of Parker.

¹¹¹ Neal, History of the Puritans, Vol. I. p. 121.

¹¹² 1 Eliz. ch. 2.

¹¹³ Hallam, Const. Hist. Vol. I. pp. 155, 193.

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XI.

treason.¹¹⁴ Vainly was a single voice in either House of Parliament uplifted against the passing of this oppressive law.¹¹⁵ It was brought in by the Queen's ministers, passed almost unanimously, and continued to disgrace the statute-book for upwards of two hundred years. Very many parishes were left wholly unprovided by reason of the number of clergy who refused to conform to the new ritual; "but the Queen was not so much concerned for this as for maintaining her supremacy."¹¹⁶ All who refused unqualified compliance with every regal ordinance were sequestered; amongst the rest Miles Coverdale, the first translator of the Scriptures into English, who was driven from a small benefice, which he inoffensively and worthily filled, in his eightieth year. Sampson, dean of Christchurch, and Humphreys, the regius professor of divinity, with many others, were imprisoned for certain scruples upon very subordinate points. It was under this act that Harpsfield, who is described as a devout and learned man, was thrown into prison, and kept there during twenty years.¹¹⁷ Neither did the tone of arbitrary assumption change with a sight of the rival sufferings produced in other countries by similar usurpations of authority. In reply to the Emperor, who implored for the Catholics of England the liberty of worship, which he was willing to concede in turn to the

September,
1563.

¹¹⁴ 5 Eliz. ch. 1.

¹¹⁵ Parliamentary History, Vol. I. p. 685.

¹¹⁶ Neal, Vol. I. p. 143.

¹¹⁷ Fuller, Church Hist. Vol. III. p. 34.

Protestants in his own dominions, Elizabeth insists on the right and duty of a government absolutely to dictate the faith of its subjects, and her determination to do so. “She was too deeply imbued with arbitrary principles to endure any public deviation from the mode of worship she should prescribe. In her answer to Ferdinand the Queen declares that she cannot grant churches to those who disagree from *her* religion.”¹¹⁸

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XI.

While Philip was still busy extirpating the treason of dissent in the Netherlands, a statute was passed in England, whereby it was rendered a capital crime for a priest to administer under any circumstances the rite of absolution. Then came the more practical and sordid expedients of fine and confiscation. A law was made enabling the crown to mulct every individual 20*l.* a month who omitted attendance at church; and in case of inability to pay this sum to confiscate two-thirds of whatever property he might possess.¹¹⁹ “Nor were these statutes merely designed for terror’s sake, to keep a check over the disaffected, as some would pretend. They were executed in the most sweeping and indiscriminate manner, unless perhaps a few families of high rank might enjoy a connivance. Mayne, a priest, was hanged at Launceston without any charge against him except his religion; and a gentleman who had harboured him was sentenced

Penal laws
of England.

A.D. 1577.

¹¹⁸ Hallam, Vol. I. p. 162.

¹¹⁹ 13 Elizabeth, chap. 2, A.D. 1571.

CHAP. XI. to imprisonment for life. The public executions, numerous as they were, scarcely form the most odious part of this persecution. The government did not pretend to deny the employment of torture. The common law of England has always abhorred the accursed mysteries of the prison-house, and neither admits of torture to extort confession, nor of any penal infliction not warranted by a judicial sentence. But this law, though still sacred in the courts of justice, was set aside by the Privy Council under the Tudor line. The rack seldom stood idle in the Tower for all the latter part of Elizabeth's reign."¹²⁰

The Puri-
tans.

The number of Catholics who perished in Elizabeth's reign for adherence to their religion can hardly with precision be assigned. But they were not the only objects of despotic cruelty. For derelictions of obedience precisely the most opposite to theirs, as many of the Puritans suffered. Fines, incarcerations, the pillory, mutilation, torture, and death, were the doom of Protestant as well as Catholic recusancy, for the crime of both was the same; they disallowed the right of power to judge between them and God; and power being constitutionally uncontrolled dealt with them according to its will. The temper of authority is strikingly revealed in the parliamentary records of the period. In the parliament which met 8th May, 1572, two bills regarding church matters having been intro-

¹²⁰ Hallam, Vol I. pp. 197, 201.

duced in the Commons, Elizabeth sent an indignant command to deliver up the bills, and never again to presume to meddle in such matters without her permission. The servile Commons did not venture to disobey, and even added a deprecatory message, hoping that her highness would not "conceive ill-opinion of their house, if it so were that her Majesty should not like well of the said bills, or of the parties that preferred them."¹²¹ Peter Wentworth, an outspoken man, ventured subsequently to advert in debate to this interference as a "doleful message" from the crown; whereupon he was committed by the Queen's warrant to the Tower, and parliament itself was not convened during the five ensuing years.

The first assemblies of the Nonconformists for worship were dispersed by armed force, and those who were present were taken into custody. They were arraigned before the Court of High Commission for non-attendance at church, and for "derogating from the Queen's authority, in appointing indifferent things in God's worship." Twenty-four men and seven women, who had been arrested on the same occasion, were sent to Bridewell, and there immured for twelve months.¹²² The Puritans were strictly forbidden either to preach or print their doctrines, and as they manfully set at nought the prohibition, "the prisons were full of them." Two of the Brownists, named Thacker and

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XI.

22d May,
1572.

Forbidden
to preach or
print.

¹²¹ D'Ewes's Journal, pp. 213, 214.

¹²² Neal, Vol. I. pp. 197, 201.

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Coping, “were hanged, in June 1584, at St. Edmundsbury for the same offence,—the scattering their schismatic pamphlets.”¹²³

The New-
gate Con-
fession of
Faith.

But were there no other testimony extant of the intolerant spirit of the time and the despotic power of the crown, the memorable Confession of Faith drawn up and signed by the Nonconformists in Newgate would suffice. This singular document bears date the 4th December, 1572, and appears to have been compiled with the hope of disarming the severity of the court, by whose order these innocent people were month after month detained in prison. In all important points they profess themselves to hold the tenets of the Church of England, though they avow their insuperable objection to the use of the surplice, the cross in baptism, and other observances of a similar nature. But their confession proved unavailing. Elizabeth thought there was not rigour enough, and published proclamations full of menace and invective against all who resisted her ecclesiastical authority; and Cecil was directed to reprove certain bishops for their remissness in the work of persecution. Cecil appears, at times to have been ashamed of his task, and he once ventured to remonstrate with the Primate on his “urging men, by examination, to accuse themselves, and then punishing them. Your Grace’s proceeding I will not say is rigorous, but I think it scant charitable.”¹²⁴

¹²³ Fuller, Church History,
Vol. III. p. 66.

¹²⁴ Letter to Whitgift; Fuller,
Vol. III. p. 55.

It may be asked what had this to do with the fortunes of the Netherlanders? Much, and in various ways, at which, however, it must suffice briefly to glance. Some congregations of French Huguenots and Dutch Lutherans had been for some time permitted to exist, under special protection, in London and other towns, and it was not unknown that they brought with them habits of industry and manufacturing skill highly useful to the communities among whom they dwelt. But neither the consciousness of this, nor the considerations which usually weighed with Elizabeth in conciliating the gratitude and sympathy of a powerful party abroad, could curb the love of despotism, or attemper the language of her government towards the exiles, where she suspected them of sympathy with her own nonconforming subjects. Certain of the Puritans, in despair of being allowed the privilege of worship, however private in their own language, ventured to frequent the Dutch chapels. How keenly should not the reproach of driving men in their own land to such a resource have been felt—if persecution could feel ashamed! The effect was far different. In April 1573, the Privy Council sent a message to the pastors of the Dutch churches in England, warning them in the Queen's name "not to receive into their communion any of her realm that offered to join with them, lest the Queen should be moved to banish themselves out of the kingdom."¹²⁵ And the infatuation of this system stopped not at empty

CHAP.
XI.The Dutch
churches in
England.¹²⁵ Neal, Vol. I. p. 261.

CHAP. XI. threats. Some disputes having occurred among the Dutch congregation at Norwich, the royal commissioners thought fit to interpose. The elders and ministers naturally refused to acknowledge their jurisdiction; and for their contumacy they were expelled the kingdom.¹²⁶

Commercial
policy of
Elizabeth.

From Elizabeth's accession the trade of the Netherlands had severely felt her jealous policy.¹²⁷ The duty on the export of raw wool was doubled; and the merchants complained, "those of Antwerp principally, that unreasonable customs were imposed upon their cloths, and that many of their wares,—hats, girdles, ribands, pins, knives, &c., were absolutely forbidden to be brought into England."¹²⁸ At the instance of the Spanish minister these prohibitions were indeed withdrawn, but only to be re-enacted in 1569, with additional rigour.¹²⁹ Certain exemptions were subsequently made in favour of the Dutch traders of Embden; but the Flemings had no cause to look save with aversion on such an ally as Elizabeth. Though adhering, for the most part, to the faith of Rome, they had as bravely borne the brunt of the civil war, and as nobly withstood the power of the oppressor as their Dutch brethren. One after another they had seen their flourishing cities given up to pillage, and year after year their prolific plains laid waste and their once joyous villages made desolate. Yet they yielded not; they still hoped for

¹²⁶ Strype, Annals, Vol. II. p. 284.

¹²⁸ 5 Eliz. cap. 7.

¹²⁷ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 77.

¹²⁹ Smith, Mem. of Wool, ch.

20, 26.

help from foreign powers, whose manifest interest it would have been to aid them, but no help worth having came.¹²⁹ In the course of 1583 and 1584, the few places of importance that had hitherto escaped the infliction of a Spanish garrison, were successively beleaguered and forced to surrender. Ypres, Brussels, and Ghent, had fallen, and the Duke of Parma having at length “the whole of Flanders, except Ostend and Sluys, under his command,”¹³⁰ sat down, with a force of 12,000 men, before the last and greatest of them all, the then unrivalled Antwerp.

The foundation of this celebrated city is ascribed to the maritime industry of the thirteenth century. By what gradual means it rose in wealth and population we may infer from its early claim of admission to the Hanseatic League; and when the prestige of that confederacy had passed away, Antwerp was found to have outgrown nearly all its contemporaries and competitors for mercantile fame. Without meddling in the concerns or fomenting the domestic quarrels of its neighbours, it doubtless benefited by the liberal hospitality it was ever ready to afford the exiled artisans of Bruges and Ghent and the expatriated Jews of England and Portugal.¹³¹ But the greatness of Antwerp was mainly attributable to its intrinsic worth and wisdom; and its aspect in the days of Charles V., ere the hand of the spoiler had marred its pride and beauty, is still imaged forth in

¹²⁹ Even while the Duke of Anjou was acknowledged as nominal sovereign by the States, France could not be induced to

send any efficient assistance into the Netherlands.

¹³⁰ Davies, Vol. II. p. 156.

¹³¹ Basnage, Lib. IV. p. 38.

CHAP. XI. the graphic page of Louis Guicciardini. The merchants of Antwerp were, in his time, "esteemed the richest and most accomplished men of business in the west of Europe." Their traffic was with every land, and they were fit to hold the reins of universal commerce, from their enlightenment and trustworthiness. Knowledge of every kind abounded in the city of the Scheldt; and at a time when female education, save among the highest ranks, was elsewhere neglected, the wives and daughters of the Antwerpers were frequently familiar with four or five different languages, and generally were so brought up as to be able to consult with, and, when necessary, to aid their fathers and husbands in the arduous concerns of foreign and domestic trade. There dwelt artists of every walk and grade, workers in metal, lapidaries, sculptors, and "a crowd of painters;" and there likewise artificers in various branches of manufacture, who, by the competition which their number caused, and the stimulating presence of one another's progress, continued to improve ever more and more. Manufactories of wool, linen, tapestry, and leather, "of glass that rivalled the Venetian, and carpets that resembled those of Turkey," gave employment to a multitude of hands; and navigation, with its train of attendant avocations, occupied as many more. They had, likewise, great establishments, where every conceivable variety of mercery might be bought, from the coarse garb of the peasant to the silks and velvets of delicate wear, and cloths of silver and gold.

The city contained upwards of forty noble churches, two-and-twenty market-places, and between 13,000 and 14,000 dwelling-houses. “ You might count 124 jewellers (not to speak of the dealers in precious stones), 594 clothiers, 169 bakers, and 170 who sold provisions.” In all, the population was supposed considerably to exceed 100,000 souls.¹³²

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XI.

The intelligence, wealth, and independent bearing of Antwerp, had long been viewed with jealousy by the King of Spain; ¹³³ and he had resolved, whenever fit occasion served, to crush its lofty spirit and disperse those elements of self-reliant strength which, so long as they were concentrated within its walls, excited his envy and alarm. When, after a protracted struggle, therefore, the exhausted garrison, despairing of relief, gave way, the city was abandoned to indiscriminate plunder and carnage. Upwards of 3000 lives were taken in cold blood; and the work of spoliation lasted many days.¹³⁴ Philip had the satisfaction of learning that the glory of the greatest city in his widely-extended realm was laid even with the dust. But was it not his own city, and was he not an absolute king?

Antwerp
guilty of
greatness.

In the general dispersion of the inhabitants, some of the Protestants, chiefly persons of the poorer sort, fled to England. They knew that there were some congregations of their brethren there, and if they understood, they disregarded, in their

Dispersion
of its inha-
bitants.

¹³² Guicciardini, Desc. Pays Bas, p. 92, et seq.

¹³³ De Witt, Part I. ch. 12.

¹³⁴ Grotius, De Reb. Belg.

CHAP. XI. terror, the disadvantages which, as Calvinists or Anabaptists, they would have to endure by taking up their residence there.¹³⁵ Panic-stricken, without guides and without means, they were ready to seek any shelter, however unpromising, and it was easier, at the moment, to reach England, perhaps, than other places. But whether their numbers were exaggerated, or that a portion of them ultimately migrated elsewhere, it is certain that no important accession of wealth, skill, or population, was derived from their coming into England; and it is particularly noted that the woollen manufacture, to which they were supposed to have brought fresh hands and knowledge, made comparatively little progress during the ensuing period.¹³⁶

Whither?

But their fellow-citizens of other callings and conditions of life, the men of wealth, of accomplishments, of learning, of enterprise, of taste,—the bankers, the merchants, the scholars, the artists,—whither should they fly, now that their place of pride was desecrated, and their ancient home become their inhuman masters' prey? Whither should they go, these conquered men, whose hearts were still unconquered? "One may easily imagine," says De Witt, "why they sat not down in France or England, in neither of which was any

¹³⁵ It was not very long before that Brown, and others of the early Independents, had been obliged to fly from England; and "we must not forget that, in 1584, John Lewes was burned at Nor-

wich for denying the Godhead of Christ, and other detestable heresies."—Fuller, Church Hist. Vol. III. p. 67.

¹³⁶ Smith, Memoirs of Wool, ch. 23.

liberty of religion, but an arbitrary government in both, with high duties on imported and exported goods. And though the Protestant merchants, by reason of the great tranquillity and good situation of England would have inclined to settle there, yet were they discouraged from coming into a country where there were no excises or imposts on lands or any other taxes equally charging all; but heavy customs duties upon all imports and exports, to which foreigners and their descendants must pay twice as much as the English; yea, in the subsidies of parliament foreigners must pay double assessment: beside which, all strangers are excluded from their guilds, and halls of trade and manufactures, so that none have permission to work there, either as journeymen or masters, save in those arts or callings whereof the inhabitants are ignorant; all which made the Antwerpens think England no fit place for them to settle in.”¹³⁷

To Leyden many of them in preference directed their steps, but the chief part of the merchants settled at Amsterdam, which thereby received so vast an accession of wealth and enterprise, that its dimensions had to be considerably enlarged, and it soon became the commercial capital of Europe.¹³⁸ The tendency of the war had been in various ways to concentrate the opulence and skill of the Netherlands in the Dutch provinces, and the few strong places in Flanders; and after these latter had fallen, Holland became the refuge of all that was

Migrate to
Holland.

¹³⁷ De Witt, Part I. ch. 12.

¹³⁸ Ibid. ch. 11.

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truly great and unvanquished in both regions. Happily the government was now strong and wise enough to secure to men of every creed who claimed its protection entire liberty of conscience. A fanatical party continued to exist, and, in after times, acquired a baneful, though brief, ascendancy; but at the eventful crisis of the country's fate, the earnest, bold, and thoroughly enlightened counsels of Barneveldt prevailed,¹³⁹ and toleration once laid as the corner-stone of Dutch liberty and greatness, though casually hidden and forgotten, was never subsequently removed.

Loss with-
out gain.

Nor let it be inconsiderately concluded that all which England failed to win from the wreck of the Flemish towns Holland gained. The permanent good of one country is much more rarely identical with the injury of another than is vulgarly imagined. A great and lasting injury was in fact sustained by both countries, though Holland reaped some present compensation, which Britain failed to do. But could Cecil and Walsingham have foreseen that dismantled and denationalised Belgium was fated to become the battle-ground of European freedom, and that upon its no longer self-defended plains were to be squandered year after year more Dutch and English blood and treasure than the whole struggle against Philip cost; and if they could have looked a little down the stream of time and seen the labour and industry, both of the allies, whom they

¹³⁹ Davies, Vol. II. p. 443.

professed to aid, and of their own people, whose interest they desired to serve, irredeemably mortgaged to pay for their interminable efforts to prevent Belgium being absorbed by France, they would have striven more zealously to lead their too-cunning and self-engrossed mistress into the timely adoption of a more generous, and a far more economical foreign policy. Luxemburg and Hainault might not have been rescued from the misrule of Spain, but Flanders, with its great cities, its great arts, its great marine, and its great remembrances, might easily have been saved, and enabled, in conjunction with the seven emancipated States, to have formed such a power as neither Louis XIV. nor his successors in aggression would have found it easy to overthrow. But the golden opportunity was allowed to slip, and we and our children, as well as the Dutch people, will never be exonerated from the penalty of the error. Some of the Antwerpers went to Sweden, there to teach the people how the iron they had hitherto exported in its raw state might be cast and wrought.¹⁴⁰

The union of the Seven Provinces dates from 1579. Thenceforth the Dutch felt themselves to be a free people, and this consciousness, though their very existence continued long in constant jeopardy, elevated their character and enhanced their power. The war was still many years protracted, until the assailed no longer feared to become the

Success of
the union.

¹⁴⁰ Macpherson, Vol. II. p. 246.

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assailants ; in concert with the English, they fitted out an expedition against Lisbon in 1589, and a still more daring one against Cadiz in 1596. Soon afterwards the government of Spain declared its insolvency, and in 1598 its once haughty monarch sunk, humiliated and baffled, into the grave.

Triumph.

But ere the sixteenth century closed, still better and more enduring fruits of national freedom had been gathered. Already were the adventurous sails of the Provinces spread in every quarter of the world. The claim of the Spaniards to monopolise the traffic of the Indian seas was scornfully set at nought. A company for the purpose of trading to the East was formed in 1595, and its ships returned laden with produce and treasure. Three voyages of discovery were undertaken ; and, in 1598, an expedition, penetrating through the straits to which its commander gave the name of Magellan, returned home by the Cape of Good Hope. Two thousand vessels of all craft were built in the year 1599, in the ports of the Seven Sea Lands.

CHAPTER XII.

A GREAT NATION.

“The prodigious increase of the Netherlands in their domestic and foreign trade, riches, and multitude of shipping, is the envy of the present, and may be the wonder of all future generations; and yet the means whereby they have thus advanced themselves are sufficiently obvious, and are in a great measure imitable by most other nations. It is good laws, such as cause an increase of people, which enrich a country; and if we retrench by law the labour of our people, we shall drive them to other countries that give better rates and wages.”¹

WE have glanced at the means whereby the Dutch were fitted for national freedom; let us look now at the manner in which they used and enjoyed it.

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XII.
THE
DUTCH.

It is important to bear in mind that the Dutch were industrially and socially free before they essayed to become nationally so. Personal self-dependence amongst them preceded the hope of nationality. They had established a sound and free commercial system before they attempted to

¹ Sir Josiah Child, *Discovery of Trade*, p. 1.

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found a separate polity.² They were trained to habits of self-reliance in all the difficult and diversified affairs of industry before they undertook to apply the vigour and ability which such habits give to affairs of state. And thus when the opportunity arose they were ready to make use of it. Other nations, suffering more grievously, and impelled by a more enthusiastic love for theoretic liberty, have had fairer opportunities for working out their political salvation, and have bared their breasts to the sword of tyranny with as heroic and more unanimous resolution. Yet they have bled in vain; some of them exhausted by the pertinacity and superior patience of their foes,—others ruined by the intoxication of premature success. Wrongs, and the sense of them, courage and its noblest manifestation, love of freedom, and the most generous self-devotion to its cause—not any or all of these suffice. They are enough for daring revolt, exemplary vengeance, startling admonitions to the insolence of oppression, but they can no more compensate for the want of habits of self-dependence in the mass than the resources of that individual genius, worth, and enthusiasm, which so often has stimulated them to unavailing sacrifice.

Causes of
their suc-
cess against
Spain.

There was no man like Rienzi in the Netherlands — no man intellectually, perhaps, his equal. For Barneveldt, though morally a better, and politically a wiser, man, was wholly deficient in the

² Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. pref. p. xiii.

idealism and eloquence of the Roman tribune. As a demagogue Barneveldt accomplished nothing, and, when himself beset by those who appealed to popular passion, he fell powerless and disarmed. Egmont and Louis of Nassau were soldiers singularly destitute of judgment in civil matters; Brederode, Hoorn, and St. Aldegonde, men of worth and wisdom rather than original power; and of William of Orange the anecdote is told that, when Granvelle heard of Alva's having seized the chiefs of the popular party, he asked "if he had caught the Taciturn," for if not he had gained nothing.³ But the case was not one where the arts of excitement were required. Oratory in such a case would probably have worked the populace into rash or idle fury, and left them, after the effervescence had subsided, to wither beneath the returning blast of oppression. It was not excitement of strong feelings that was wanting to resist the imposition of taxes without consent,—to defend the inviolability of local jurisdiction,—to win soul-liberty. Of excitement there was more than enough; the difficult duty of the leaders was to repress, direct, and regulate it, so as to prevent its ebullition or exhaustion. The Dutch had for generations been characteristically a doing and enduring people,—a people used to act without high prompting, and without noisy praise,—a people accustomed to revolve arduous efforts in their homes,—to take

³ Davies, Vol. I. p. 549, note.

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quiet counsel together in their villages and towns, —to go forth unbidden through winter storms and uncheered solitudes,—from childhood to maturity to fight unfalteringly their fathers' fight against the inexorable fury of the elements,—accustomed to believe undoubtingly, and to realise the belief that work was the true lot of man, which each one had, indeed, the right to lay out for himself, but which it was his imperative duty to choose and do.⁴ What would not Rienzi have accomplished with such materials? But wanting them he could effect permanently nothing; he could but struggle and “fail gloriously.”

National
habits.

These were the habits that not only prompted the Dutch to beard the wrath of Spain, but, without prefatory menace or vaunting, enabled them to withstand its power. They had counted the cost beforehand, but having done so they would pay it. Their previous estimate of it was no flattering one; they believed that the loss and suffering to be endured would be unspeakable and grievous: they would accordingly try every expedient of half measures first, that would insure them against the chief evils of submission and the hazards of defeat: —a calculating people! They would take a French prince, though young and inexperienced, for sovereign on certain terms; they would attorn, as tenants-at-will for peace to Elizabeth of Eng-

⁴ “Si l'on approfondit les raisons de semblables évènements, on trouvera que ce sont presque toujours des causes morales qui

decident de la fortune des nations.”—*La Richesse de la Hollande*, Tom. I. pref. p. 9.

land; they would even make terms with Philip himself if he would be reasonable and just. But all these proving abortive as means of securing them liberty of conscience and local self-rule,—they would persevere in paying the price of civil war for national independence. Not without many griefs and misgivings did they finally adopt a purpose, by whose accomplishment alone they were slowly and soberly convinced that opinion, property, industry, and life itself, could be made secure and free.

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And hence it ensued that, when at length the heavens began to clear over their heads, and they bethought them of the need of beginning to build up a national government for themselves,—it was not necessary for their leaders to go into committee on first principles, or attempt the hopeful task of improvising a constitution. The thing required was but the embodiment of sentiments already rooted in the national mind—but the application of old-established usages to greater objects, and on a larger scale—but the twisting and knotting together above their heads of the boughs whose stems were already grown.

National
government

Localism was the only form of political liberty they had ever known; and the more perfectly the supreme organisation could be framed as a magnified image of municipal usage the surer would it be of appreciation and respect. Other governments there might be, but no other government could be Dutch,—for no other could adequately express, and no other could so tend to keep alive, the deep sense

Preserva-
tion of local
rights.

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of self-dependence which, individually and collectively, was the core of Dutch existence. The deputies of each constituent province to the earlier States-General were regarded, in a certain degree, as envoys appointed to confer together for the mutual weal of all, rather than as representatives in our sense of the term. They had in every case explicit instructions given them, and a limited discretion which they dared not to exceed.

The States-General.

The assembly of the States-General was, in a certain sense, regarded as the aggregate of the provincial legislatures, and, as already observed, in the memorable session convened at Bergen-op-Zoom to ratify the Twelve Years' Truce with Spain, not fewer than eight hundred members were present.⁵ Which no doubt was very inconvenient:—very; but the time and the occasion was not one to think of that. Inconveniences are easily remedied,—remedy themselves; but of seven jealous provinces to make one compact and contented nation—that is hard enough to conceive by any method,—worth disregarding a thousand inconveniences in the effort to effect. That the effort was successful is undoubtedly attributable to the wisdom of adhering scrupulously to the principles and usages which the people cherished and confided in, even to the punctilious observance of immaterial or inconvenient forms. Far from exulting in the originality of its design, or seeking to remind the world of its novelty, the framers of the consti-

⁵ Batavia Illustrata, Part I. sect. 3, p. 124.

tution felt, that on the success of their endeavour to graft it into the stock of localism, of old deep-rooted in the soil, whence it might draw sustenance and vigour, its only chance of vitality depended. Yet we find speculations gravely put forward in after times and other countries, whether it would not have been better “if the Seven Provinces had made but one sovereignty, though, *perhaps*, it would have been dangerous in the beginning to have divested them of their old privileges in favour of any new created body!”⁶ By whom the dangerous office of divestiture could have been performed we are not told.

All things considered, may we not more reasonably conclude that the great and good men of 1579 judged best what it was right to do, and what was possible to be done? The stadtholders, or provincial lord-lieutenants, had heretofore been appointed by the Emperors and Dukes of Burgundy. Henceforth each state should choose whomsoever it would to fill that dignity; and on the first occasion of exercising the power, Guelderland and Overyssele elected the Count de Meurs, Zealand and Utrecht the Sieur de Villers, Friezland and Groningen Count William of Nassau, while Holland chose Prince Maurice. It was deemed indispensable that each province should retain intact its ancient and inherent severalty. Its tribunals filled by natives, born or adopted, claimed no jurisdictions or authority beyond its precincts, but within them they should be supreme. Its Legislative Assembly, con-

⁶ Batavia Illustrata, Part I. sect. 3.

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stituted by the representatives of the nobles and the burghers, could alone create or abolish provincial offices, impose or remit provincial taxes, and determine where troops should be stationed in the province. Other powers of great importance were reserved by each province to itself—the nomination of its own pensionary, and of the governor of each fortified town within its boundaries—the payment and direction of its own militia—the veto on certain municipal appointments, and many other prerogatives of a like nature.⁷ It was the spirit of localism that had burst the yoke of Spain, and by the preservation of that spirit alone could the common freedom be preserved.

Disparity of
the pro-
vinces.

A great, perhaps the chief motive which, at the foundation of the Union, prompted the jealous definition of local rights and federal powers rather increased in potency in after years. This was the disproportion between the maritime and the inland states in wealth and population, and the vast preponderance which, under any other system than that which was adopted, Holland would have acquired over all the others. In the books of the federal exchequer, the fixed rateability of the provinces was thus assigned:⁸—

Holland	.	.	.	.	.	.	Fl. 57	14	8
Friezland	.	.	.	.	.	.	11	10	11
Zealand	.	.	.	.	.	.	9	1	10
Groningen	.	.	.	.	.	.	5	15	6
Utrecht	.	.	.	.	.	.	5	15	5
Guelderland	.	.	.	.	.	.	5	11	2
Overyssel	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	10	8
Total (including Drent)							Fl. 100	0	0

⁷ Batavia Illustrata, Part I. sect. 3.

⁸ Ibid.

In the Council of State, or executive senate, each province was represented according to the proportion of its contributions, while in the States-General the votes were taken, as was said, *non capitatim sed provincialiter*. Thus a reasonable balance of interests was maintained, and the perils of disunion in a great measure obviated. The Council of State was first established in 1584; and to it were confided the enlistment, maintenance, and ordering of the army, and the collection and disbursement of the federal revenue.⁹

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The nobles or landowners, and the deputies of the towns, who were chiefly merchants or persons in some way connected with trade, formed equally constituent parts of the Council of State and the States-General. If there arose in detail questions of minor difference between the two orders, or between agricultural and commercial provinces, they were at least certain of fair and full discussion, not only from the equipoise of numbers which each side possessed, but from the habit of slow and cautious deliberation which so remarkably characterised the national proceedings at all times.¹⁰ But, in the main, they seem to have blended together harmoniously. Temple, who studied the constitution of the United Provinces when at its maturity, and beheld the great prosperity which they had reached beneath its rule, has traced, in well-known terms, the

The landed
aristocracy.

⁹ Batavia Illustrata, Part I. sect. 3.

¹⁰ Foreign powers frequently

complained of the tardiness of the Dutch when called upon to break some old alliance, or enter into

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vivid impression which it left upon his mind. "In the assembly of the States, it seldom happens but that, united by one common bond of interest, and having all one common end of the public good, they come, after full debate, to easy resolutions, yielding to the power of reason, and suppressing private interests and passions."¹¹

Absence of
class in-
terests.

We find but few and transient indications of any feeling of jealousy on account of the large share of influence which, as compared with their actual wealth or numbers, the aristocracy were permitted to enjoy. Nor are we left in any uncertainty as to the cause of this social harmony. The nobles of Holland possessed the wisdom and happiness of not attempting to assert, as a separate class, interests distinct from or opposed to those of the community at large. The change in their habits and dispositions previous to the revolutionary war has been already noticed; and its happy result is well described by one whose tastes and associations were sufficiently fastidious, and whose business in life was that of a courtier: "Those families who live upon their patrimonial estates are differently bred and mannered from the traders, though like them in

some new one; and, in 1609, Jeamin, the French minister at the Hague, suggested a novel scheme of executive government, which his royal master had devised, and the tenour of which may be inferred from the circumstance that it stipulated for a seat in the Supreme Council of Holland for the ambassadors of England

and France! The Dutch were not disposed to offend their royal allies, so they made Jeamin some very handsome presents, told him they would take his plan into due consideration, and then quietly proceeded to note it down, as they said, "in the *forget-book*."—Davies, Vol. II. p. 445.

¹¹ Temple, Ch. 2.

modesty of garb and habit. Their youth are generally bred up at schools and universities, and when they are rich they travel for some years after the course of their studies at home. The chief end of their breeding is to make them fit for the service of their country ; and though income from rents seldom renders them very rich, they content themselves with the honour of being useful to the public, with the esteem of their cities or their country (neighbourhood), and with the care of their fortune, which, by the frugality of living, at first necessary, and now grown universal and honourable, seldom fails."¹² But they had something more than good esteem in reward for their patriotism. In the distribution of office, whether civil or military, " many of the best charges" were always in their hands. They fitted themselves for the business of rule ; and a business people, who before all things valued fitness, cheerfully conferred on the well-educated, well-conditioned, and well-working descendants of their old nobility, a greater portion of the magistracies and other public functions than upon those of their own order.¹³

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On the other hand, it appears from the outset to have been recognised as a fixed principle of the constitutional government of Holland, that the great interests of commerce could only be adequately represented by commercial men. Merchants were not merely eligible to every trust and station, but

Merchant
statesmen.

¹² Temple, Ch. 4.

¹³ Ibid.

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there was hardly any which many of them were not always and on system called upon to fill.¹⁴ Among the leading causes to which the great prosperity of the Dutch was ascribed by Sir Josiah Child, a shrewd, discerning man, and of singularly enlightened views on economic matters for his time, the first enumerated is, "that in their greatest councils of state and war, they have trading merchants who have not only the theoretical knowledge, but the practical experience of trade."¹⁵ It may be readily conceived also, that there were other advantages from this infusion of the mercantile element into the government. The authority of the federal legislature and executive rested mainly on opinion. In antagonism with any considerable number of the provincial states, it is difficult to see how it could have been preserved. Even against any single dissident, its powers, as originally constituted, were extremely limited. So likewise with regard to its social constitution. In the absence of either a powerful monarchical or ecclesiastical element, the predominance of the landed aristocracy must have become entire and unrestrained, but for the counterpoise of commercial wealth, intelligence, and recognised rank. And without imputing one base or disparaging motive to the former, we may justly believe that a monopoly of political power in their hands must to such a country as Holland speedily have proved fatal.

¹⁴ De Witt, Part I. ch. 7.¹⁵ Discovery of Trade, ch. 1.

It was a case in which popular confidence,—
 thorough, cordial, and spontaneous loyalty in the
 mass of the community was essential, not to success
 alone, but to existence. Beset by enemies on every
 side, and with the blood-bought freedom of thought,
 of speech, of intercourse, of trade within,—with a
 reading, and writing, and calculating people, an
 enterprising, creative, and victorious people,—class
 legislation was a thing impossible; and from other
 circumstances already adverted to, any attempt at
 premature centralisation, founded, as it must have
 been, upon the hollow affectation of considering seven
 distinct and still dissimilar communities one people,
 would probably have ended in distraction and ruin.
 The wisdom of the Dutch, in making the national
 government a faithful reflection of the national mind,
 is signally attested by the results. An impetus was
 quickly given to the intellect, and power, and whole
 being of the nation, like that which the restoration
 of long-crippled limbs imparts to every portion of
 the bodily frame. It seemed as though the union
 of so many self-reliant communities in one firm
 bond of life-alliance had redoubled in each its self-
 respect, while it more than redoubled its field of
 view and means of acquisition—fortifying all in their
 persuasion of right, stimulating all to a nobler and
 more palpable competition, and furnishing all with
 allies and with friends, in whose weal or misfortune
 it was impossible to be unconcerned.

To nothing was their eventual success more Public faith.
 attributable than the unblemished credit which the

CHAP. XII. } revolutionary government maintained throughout periods of the most trying exigency. They were beaten again and again; their bravest and best were struck down; all Belgium was severed from their alliance; they were abandoned and betrayed in the days of their ill-fortune by foreign powers; there were seasons when they must have believed their glorious cause irreparably undone; but never did they demur to the fulfilment of an engagement; never was the interest of their loan withheld; never did they break their word. And the spirit of commerce, which honoureth them of whom it hath honour, stood by them in their times of utmost need. Their financial negotiations, however costly from the desperate nature of the case, were nearly always successful. It was universally believed of them that to the last farthing of their ability they would pay what they owed; and men confided in their intention when it literally seemed that there was little else to confide in.

What a contrast to their imperial antagonist! Notwithstanding its unprecedented resources, the government of Spain was frequently destitute of available means to equip its expeditions or pay its troops. It is to this striking and notorious fact that allusion is made in the quaint English pamphlet of the time already cited.¹⁶ The singular "prosperity which God hath given the Provinces shews that it is of Him, and the policy and power of princes doth envy and oppose it in vain; and

¹⁶ Hexam, *Tongue Combat*, p. 45.

as Tantalus is thirsty with water at the lip, so these
 beggar and break at the fountain-head of gold and
 silver.”

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The commerce of the Dutch, after the organis- Expansion.
 ation of the government, expands more rapidly than
 we can watch or follow it. Other nations have
 worked out their political salvation worthily, yet
 have seemed rather to lie down to rest after their
 labours than to turn immediately to new and peace-
 ful conquests. But in Holland the people had
 been trained to labour and liberty, in the same
 school of experience, and would have deemed it
 unnatural to dissociate them. They valued freedom,
 not merely for its own sake, but because thereby
 they could more effectually reap the rewards of
 labour. And they prized the fruits of industry,
 not only as the means of present and sensible en-
 joyment, but as furnishing them with supplies—
 lavishly and ungrudgingly expended when needful
 —for maintaining and defending their national
 independence. The leading characteristics of the
 period may be said to have been, adherence to the
 ancient ways of thought and policy, with the acqui-
 sition and exercise of the power of universal and
 unlimited expansion.¹⁷

As the fisheries and the traffic with the Baltic Fisheries.
 countries had been the schools wherein their hardy
 sailors had been bred, and the knowledge of navi-
 gation acquired, to both of these new energy was

¹⁷ Recherches sur la Commerce, Tom. II. p. 46.

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devoted, and with augmented profit.¹⁸ In 1601, it is stated, that in the space of three days there sailed eastward from the ports of Holland between eight and nine hundred merchant-ships, beside 1500 busses, or herring-boats.¹⁹ The extraordinary account given four years afterwards by Raleigh sufficiently attests the rapid progress that they were then making. According to his computation 3000 vessels annually visited the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland for the purpose of fishing, and the hands engaged in them could not have been fewer than 50,000. He estimates the shipping and hands employed in the re-export to other countries of the fish when cured at treble that number; and the net value of what they thus sold to their neighbours he calculates at 1,759,000*l.* a-year.²⁰ No wonder that De Witt, looking back over the progress of his country, should say that he felt sometimes as if the whole trade of the nation had sprung from the fisheries, and rested on their continuance. In his day they had still further increased about one-third; and he enters into some interesting calculations to shew how the industry they created set in motion a variety of other employments,—ship-builders and timber-merchants, cordage-makers and hemp-buyers, and so on. He estimates the absolute cost of the fleet of herring-boats, between building, outfit, and a year's wages

¹⁸ *La Richesse de la Hollande*, Tom. I. p. 45.

¹⁹ De Witt, Part I. ch. 6.

²⁰ Sir W. Raleigh, Memorial presented to the King on the trade of England with the Dutch.

to the crew, at ten millions of guilders ; four-fifths of which, he says, they are sometimes reimbursed by the value of fish taken in three prosperous voyages.²¹

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In 1610 the ambassadors of the States urged strongly upon King James I. the mutual hurt both nations sustained by reason of the duties recently imposed on Dutch goods coming into England, and the abrogation of the ancient privilege of fishing off the eastern coasts. The latter was for a time restored, but their persuasions failed to obtain a reduction of the prohibitory duties.²² A singular contrast was afforded the same year by the Emperor of Morocco, who, to evince his gratitude for the voluntary restoration, without ransom, of certain of his subjects who had been found on board some captured Spanish vessels, sent an embassy to make offers of a treaty of free commerce with the States, which were cheerfully accepted. Similar terms were soon afterwards made with the Porte ; and, in 1611, Wirtemberg and Brandenburg established mutual freedom of traffic with Holland for all goods borne on the Rhine.²³ To the liberality of the early tariffs adopted by the States-General we have eloquent testimony. “ The low duties of these wise States draw all traffic to them, and the great liberty allowed to strangers makes a continual mart. And although the duties be but small, yet the vast exports and imports do greatly increase

James I.
and the
Sultan of
Morocco.

²¹ De Witt, Part I. ch. 6.

²² Davies, Vol. II. p. 447.

²³ La Richesse de la Hollande,
Tom. I. p. 159.

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their revenues ; which vast commerce enables the common people not only to bear the burden of the excises, and impositions laid upon them, but also to grow rich.”²⁴

Exports and
imports.

The variety and extent of their importations and re-exportations seem almost incredible. There was nothing that England, France, Germany, Sweden, Russia, or the Levant produced, that, in some form, was not brought into the storehouses of Holland, thence to be either reshipped as it came, or taken out by the manufacturer to be wrought into new shapes for domestic or foreign use. In exchange for their salted fish, France sent them fruit, wine, leather, honey, and salt. From the Mediterranean they received silk, both raw and manufactured, oil, alum, and small fruit. From the Baltic ports they took timber, hemp, pitch, wax, ashes, and grain, in payment for their own manufactures, salt fish, and French goods, which they either speculated in, or carried thither for sake of freights. The Swedes had also iron to dispose of, and used to give six quintals of bar iron for one barrel of herrings. The Germans supplied them in part with this metal,—sending also arms and ammunition, besides wine, and fabrics of various kinds, chiefly wrought at Frankfort, Nuremberg, and Smalkalde. “In a word, these industrious Dutch merchants vend their salted fish over the whole earth, exchanging it for other goods, or gold and silver.”²⁵ In the spring of 1599, six hundred

²⁴ Raleigh, ut supra.

²⁵ Journal Œconomique, pp. 302, 303.

and forty vessels are said to have discharged their cargoes of hemp, corn, timber, iron, and tar, from Russia, Germany, and Sweden, at the single port of Amsterdam. The gross amount of this merchandise was computed at 100,000 tons, and the average duty yielded thereby was not less per ton than twenty guilders.²⁶ This was, doubtless, a war-tax ; but on the return of peace all duties were reduced as low as possible ; and in a few years the shipping engaged in the Baltic trade was estimated at not fewer than three thousand sail ; for the Provinces had already “as many vessels as eleven kingdoms.”²⁷

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Baltic trade
—Amster-
dam.

Besides the herring and cod-fisheries, much profit was derived from that carried on for whales off the coast of Greenland. For this a more expensive outfit being requisite, exclusive privileges were granted to a company of merchants. But when the navigation in the Northern seas became generally known, and the trade well established, the States-General did not hesitate to throw open its advantages to the enterprise of the community at large. What followed ? “Since the monopoly was annulled,” says De Witt, “and the Greenland fishery set open to all men, it has increased from one to ten ; whereby,” he adds, “great numbers get their bread.”²⁸ At a subsequent period, Dr. Worsley, one of the secretaries to the English

The whale-
fishery.

²⁶ Davies, Vol. II. p. 328.

²⁷ Raleigh, ut supra.

²⁸ De Witt, Part I. ch. 6.

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XII.

Board of Trade and Plantations, being sent over to inquire into the commercial affairs of Holland, reported the value of the herring-fisheries to be not less than three millions sterling; and he verified his calculation by references to the customhouse books of the three maritime provinces, Zealand, Friezland, and Holland, in which accurate entries of the craft employed in the trade, the hands engaged, and the amount of their cargoes, were always entered. According to D'Aitzema there were seldom under 300,000 tons of herrings brought in and saved every year.²⁹ Worsley believed that the value of the Dutch fisheries at this period much exceeded all that the Spaniards yearly drew from their American possessions. "This, therefore, to the Dutch is truly the basis of a vast navigation, and a trade that extends over the entire habitable globe. Have we not reason then to call this a real gold-mine?"³⁰

Trade with
Russia.

In Russia the Dutch early sought to gain a commercial footing, not unsuccessfully. Wherever there were towns or navigable streams, the merchants of western Europe found their way.³¹ Through the silent and sterile wilderness, in company with the men of Lubeck and Bremen, they bore their varied commodities — not for sale, for there was little money in the land, but to barter them for the raw produce, of which there seemed an inexhaustible supply. The English, too, were there. Ivan Basi-

²⁹ Journal Economique, pp. 300, 301.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 302.

³¹ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 67.

lovitz II. gave them leave to settle on the northern shore, that they might traffic there without molestation on account of their religion; and, if it were possible, “find a route thence overland to China.” Thus was Archangel founded, many of the Dutch and Scotch contributing to its establishment as a place of trade. With them, also, freedom of worship, as well as traffic, were indispensable preliminaries, without which they would not come. The Czars of the sixteenth century, with more wisdom than some of their successors, cheerfully granted both conditions and observed them. Each of the colonising nations had their own church; and from Archangel they gradually sought means of intercourse with the inland towns, and at last with Moscow, and Novogorod the wealthy *entrepôt* of ancient Muscovy. All goods imported paid a duty of five per cent alone; and the merchants were allowed to export an equivalent amount duty free. Whoever sent abroad more than he brought in, paid on the difference five per cent.³² Such was the simple wisdom of the first Russian tariff.

No wonder the internal and external commerce of the country thrived and multiplied.³³ Politically the importance of Russia usually dates from the government of Peter the Great; but even when a boy that singular man delighted to spend his days among the foreign merchants and artisans who

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³² Mémoire sur le Commerce de la Russie; Journal Économique, p. 6.

³³ Essai sur le Commerce de Russie, Amsterdam, 1777.

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dwelt in the German or Dutch quarter, as it was called at Moscow. With wonder and admiration he heard them talk of lands where the mass of the people were skilled to labour, and able to obtain by it many of the luxuries and comforts which he had never seen any but the nobles and the wealthier inhabitants of the city enjoy.³⁴ His curiosity and enthusiasm were so inflamed, that he twice journeyed to Archangel to have the gratification of seeing their ships, and gazing on the element whence all their wealth and wonders seemed with more than fabled magic to have sprung. Unable any longer to repress his desire to behold the full reality of industrial civilisation, he undertook his romantic and memorable journey incognito, as one of an embassy sent from the imperial court to Holland. Delighted with the vivid realisation of his dreams, he vowed himself to the royal task of introducing certain of the great inventions and arts, especially ship-building, which he did not shrink from the toil requisite to learn mechanically; working for many hours of the day, in the guise of a carpenter, in the dockyards of Amsterdam. He had acquired, probably in Moscow, a facility in the Dutch language, and on his return to his own country it was the only foreign dialect he felt it a pleasure to use, for he had good sense enough in general to adhere to the language of his own people. In some minor regulations he departed from the

³⁴ *Mémoire sur le Commerce de la Russie*, p. 13.

liberal tariff of his predecessors, but in the main the low rates of duty were adhered to; foreign traders were multiplied, and the foundations of the civilisation, opulence, and greatness of Russia, were thus securely laid.³⁵ How important an influence the Dutch exercised in its accomplishment is sufficiently plain. CHAP.
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The discoveries of every day tend more and more to shew that antiquity knew more than modern vanity is willing to believe or confess of the useful as well as of the fine arts. Regarding a variety of processes connected with trade and manufacture, abundant evidence might be adduced to shew how old are the rudiments of our newest inventions—how ancient are the triumphs of ingenuity and skill. We have re-found out these things,—recovered them from the oblivion wherein the tide of war and barbarism had overwhelmed and hidden them; or we are indebted to the care of some handful of fugitives who in exile and obscurity preserved them from utter loss. Antiquity
of art.

The knowledge of the method of dyeing is a curious and instructive illustration of this. No dyes are probably so old as the *indicum nigrum*, or Indian ink, and the *indicum purpureum*, or indigo.³⁶ From their native East, the Phœnicians and Egyptians learned their use; the apt Greeks borrowed this amongst other things from the Methods of
dyeing.

³⁵ Mémoire sur le Commerce de la Russie, pp. 11, 19.

³⁶ Beckman, Vol. IV. p. 105.

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Phœnicians ; and by the Greeks the Romans were taught in their turn. In the wreck of civilisation, which their crimes entailed, many of its best and most beautiful inventions no doubt perished ; and this had been lost with the rest but for the Arabians, who for a lengthened and important period became the chief depositaries of the results of physical science. By these, where their conquests spread, and by the fugitive industry of their unhappy kinsmen of Israel, the knowledge of many chemical processes became once more diffused. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Jews were the dyers of Europe.³⁷ They “had learned this art in the East, where it was carried on in many things, to a degree of perfection which the moderns have not been able to attain.”³⁸ By them the Venetians and Florentines were taught to imbue their cloths with varied and durable colours. But dyeing was rendered a monopoly. None could erect dyehouses in Italy without paying a heavy tax or fine to the state ; and some of the princes considered them as government establishments, which they farmed out on such terms as their serene and illustrious ignorance judged fit. No wonder that the export of Italian fabrics dwindled to decay.

Devil's
dyes.

When mineral ingredients began to be employed more generally, and the various salts were tried for the purpose of obtaining more equal and brilliant

³⁷ Macpherson, Vol. I. pp. 335, 336.

³⁸ Beckman, art. Indigo, Vol. IV. p. 132.

hues, it naturally occurred that, from the imperfection of the processes adopted, the colours sometimes faded. Their failure was every where laid hold of as a proof of their dishonesty, if not impiety, by the vested interests in the old method of dyeing; and the strong arm of the law was invoked to protect the true and legitimate trade, and to interdict the false and delusive innovations. The absolute governments of Germany solemnly interposed accordingly. Monopoly was the appropriate policy of force, and as force was the highest sanction, so exclusiveness was the highest wisdom of that arbitrary time. They declared that woad and other things, which had hitherto been used as colouring stuffs, were the sound, honest, national dyes, and all others, such as indigo, were foreign and fraudulent novelties, invented by wicked men for the ruin of native manufactures. All new dyes were prohibited, therefore, under heavy penalties. The intermeddling mischief of rulers, however, is happily no more almighty than infallible. Were their commands and prohibitions inviolable, they would often confine the progress of the arts and sciences, and render useful inventions impossible. But the people, when they have not entirely become machines, know how to elude faulty regulations, and obtain their object by prohibited ways. This was the case with regard to the art of dyeing in the sixteenth century. A decree of the German Diet prohibited, under the severest penalties, “*the newly invented, pernicious, deceitful, eating, and corrosive, or*

A.D. 1577.

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devil's dye, for which vitriol and other eating substances were used instead of woad.”³⁹ Allusion seems to be here made to black, which at that time was the colour usually worn by the higher ranks of society. One of the conclusive tests of the interdicted dyes specified in the edict was an increase in the weight,—an incident which is now known to be invariable in black cloth with whatever substance coloured. Dark blue is also comparatively heavy; and this, when indigo came into ordinary use elsewhere, convinced the feudal sanhedrim of Germany that it could be nothing else but another foul invention of the arch-enemy. The Diet forthwith launched a patriotic anathema against indigo,—forasmuch as thereby “the trade in woad was lessened, dyed articles were injured, and money carried out of the country.”⁴⁰ Would it not be far better that Germany should be wholly independent of foreign dyes?

Prohibition
of indigo in
Germany.

It is a sad affair, however, when thrift and loyalty are set in opposition. Could the Diet by any contrivance have made indigo dearer than woad, or improved the culture of woad, so that its quality and quantity could compete with the diabolic salts and indigo,—their prohibitions, though not wise, might have been effective. But to improve, or outrun, entered not into their contemplations,—only to keep out and keep back the tide of progress, mercantile and moral. Happily their powers of re-

³⁹ Beckman, Vol. IV. p. 142.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

straining and retarding were unequal to their protective designs. The Dutch lived at the mouths of the rivers which formed the highways of German trade. Little heed gave they to interdicts against Satanic dyes. They had indigo to sell,—if not at a high price, at a low one.⁴¹ German manufacturers could not resist the temptation of cheap indigo,—fascinating drug!—destined to lure them on, despite imperial menaces and warnings, to ever greater familiarity with its contraband use, until at last they should become notorious for making the goodliest broadcloth in Europe. Unhappy German rulers,—that could not avert such a result, owing to the sordid obstinacy of these indefatigable Dutch! To do them justice they did all men could. Again and again were fulminations hurled at the obnoxious drugs,⁴² but apparently to little or no purpose. At Nuremberg the dyers were compelled annually to take an oath that they would not make use of indigo; and the form continued to be observed until a recent period, though notoriously and systematically disregarded.⁴³ Dull industry persisted doggedly in buying contraband colouring stuffs, because they were cheaper and better, instead of lawful ones, although they were worse and dearer!

Attempts of a like nature were made in other countries also, with more mischievous success. The parliament of Languedoc enacted similar measures

French and
English
laws.

⁴¹ Observations on the Affairs of Holland, p. 13.

⁴² In 1594 and 1603.

⁴³ Beckman, Vol. IV. p. 144.

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against the use of indigo in any shape whatsoever ; and it was not until Colbert's administration that the inhibition was annulled.⁴⁴ In England, under the Tudors, many attempts seem to have been made to regulate by act of parliament every branch of manufacture, and dyeing amongst the rest. Henry VII. appointed, under severe penalties, sixteen shillings a-yard as a maximum price for scarlet cloth, and eleven shillings for all other hues.⁴⁵ Wrought silks were prohibited by another statute,⁴⁶ whose aim is explained to have been "either to banish a superfluity, or gain a manufacture."⁴⁷ In the following reigns innumerable minute directions and provisions were made by law for the "more perfect working of cloths,"—regarding the several "duties of weavers, fullers, and dyers,"—for the "searching out of unlawful oils,"—as touching "deceits in worsteds,"—against selling undyed cloth to a merchant stranger, unless the owner could not find an English buyer within a given time,—for prohibiting the exportation of yarn and certain kinds of raw wool, thereby to give more employment at home, &c.⁴⁸ The most characteristic statute of Mary's reign was that which, after reciting "how the wealthy clothiers did oppress the poor weavers, by setting up and keeping divers looms, and lowering wages," enacted that no clothier

⁴⁴ Beckman, Vol. IV. p. 142.

⁴⁵ 4 Henry VII. ch. 8.

⁴⁶ 19 Henry VII. ch. 21.

⁴⁷ Bacon, Hist. Henry VII.

⁴⁸ Stat. Temp. Henry VIII.
passim.

out of a corporate town should keep above one loom, and no clothier out of a city should have above two ;—that no weaver should be employed as a fuller or dyer, and no fuller should keep a loom ; and that no weaver should have above two apprentices at a time.”⁴⁹ CHAP.
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New prescriptions and commands were issued to the weavers and dyers by Elizabeth, who seems to have had as shrewd a suspicion that no good could come of vegetable dyes as her imperial brother had regarding their mineral substitutes. An act prohibiting “certain deceitful stuffs, used in dyeing of cloth,” having failed, we find another passed, some years later, enforcing the execution of the former statute “for the better abolishing of logwood.”⁵⁰ Whence it would appear, that had manufacturing industry in the sixteenth century given heed to both its imperial and royal protectors,—and it must be confessed that their majesties seem to have been equally worthy of obedience in the matter,—dyeing would probably have soon ceased altogether, and the world have resumed its primæval simplicity of attire, so far at least as uniformity of colour was concerned. The practical result of these enactments may be gathered from the picture drawn by Raleigh of the international trade between England and the Netherlands in the next reign. So far from having succeeded in

Abolition of
logwood.

⁴⁹ 2 and 3 Philip and Mary, ch. 11.

⁵⁰ 23 Elizabeth, cap. 9 ; and 39 Elizabeth, cap. 12.

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compelling the cloths of England to be dyed at home, it is stated that “eighty thousand undressed and undyed cloths were annually exported from England, whereby 400,000*l.* per annum, for fifty-five years past, being above 20,000,000*l.*, had been lost to the nation, besides the further enlarging of traffic by importing materials for dyeing and the increase of customs thereon. Moreover there had been annually exported in baizes and Devonshire kerseys, all white, fifty thousand cloths, whereby 5,000,000*l.* more had been lost for want of dyeing and dressing. English cloths were sent white to Amsterdam, and there dressed, dyed, and shipped to Spain, Portugal, and other countries, where they were sold by the name of Flemish bayes ; so we lose the very name of our home-bred commodities.”⁵¹

Amsterdam

From the fall of Antwerp, Amsterdam had taken the lead among the commercial cities of the Netherlands. Certain of her merchants, finding themselves prohibited during the war from trading to the Peninsula, or any other of the Spanish territories, with “resolute and good courages, which God without doubt endowed them withal, sailed prosperously into the East Indies, and there first began the trade. And notwithstanding that the Portugales and Spaniards sought, by all the means they could, at the first to debar and keep them from it, nevertheless they abstained not the next

A.D. 1595.

⁵¹ Raleigh, Mem. to King James.

year happily to proceed thither again.”⁵² The splendid fruits of this notable venture we shall presently see. In 1609 the celebrated Bank of Amsterdam was established; whereby greatly increased facilities were afforded to the merchants of all countries whose business led them there, as well as to those of the Provinces.⁵³ The spirit of universal commerce animated the long-repressed and hindered nation. In the Staathouse of Amsterdam the floor of the burghers’ hall was inlaid with marble so as to represent maps of all the countries of the world,—a mute, but eloquent expression of the all-embracing enterprise of the people.⁵⁴ Within twenty years from the recognition of their independence by neutral powers, the flag of the Union waved on the shores of Ceylon and Mexico, in the Baltic and the Levant, off the coast of Ireland and of Cuba, the shores of Guinea and of Labrador.⁵⁵ Nor was this the outburst of rash or sanguine speculation. The progress of the Dutch, though rapid, was progressive and secure,—the application rather of old wisdom and experience to new fields of enterprise, and the improvement of such as they had been familiar with already. Their voyages to the Indian Seas led them not to neglect their ancient trade with England or the Baltic countries. They endea-

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⁵² Observations on the Affairs of Holland, p. 7.

⁵³ Davies, History of Holland, Vol. II. p. 561.

⁵⁴ H. Moll, Vol. III. p. 582.

⁵⁵ Beawes, Lex Mercatoria, p. 10.

CHAP. XII. voured, and with a success wholly unparalleled, to render their country the chief depôt, and themselves the principal carriers, of the world.

Universal
commerce.

And thus it came to pass that, though destitute of forests, of mines and vineyards, there was nowhere so great an abundance and variety of metals, timber, and wines ; and when, in seasons of scarcity, France or England needed supplies of corn, they looked not to Poland or Livonia, where it grew, but to the cities of the Dutch, where they were always sure to find a ready and plentiful store. “ It seems as if the spices grew there, that the oils were gathered there, that it nourished the precious insect that spun the silk, and that all sorts of drugs, for medicine, or dyeing, were in the number of its products.”⁵⁶ They purchased cobalt, and smelt made from it, from the merchants of Saxony, for the purpose of exportation to India ; “ and the Indians knew as little where the Dutch obtained it, as the Saxons did who were the ultimate consumers.”⁵⁷ In like manner, they brought indigo, purchased from the inhabitants of the East, to sell again to these same Saxon people ; and sell it they would, all interdicts and decrees to the contrary notwithstanding, for the best of all reasons, that the thing was useful and wanted — that when sold it yielded them a profit : — such things are very apt to sell.

But the industrial policy of the Dutch was founded on ideas wholly and essentially different

⁵⁶ Beawes, Lex Mercatoria,
p. 11.

⁵⁷ Beckman, Vol. IV. p. 102.

from that of the kingdoms around them. “The freedom of traffic had ever been greater with them than amongst any of their neighbours ;”⁵⁸ and its different results began to appear. Not only were strangers of every race and creed sure of an asylum in Holland, but of a welcome ; and singular pains were taken to induce those whose skill enabled them to contribute to the wealth of the state to settle permanently in the great towns.

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So desirous were the people of Amsterdam to increase their manufactures, that in 1614 they offered large sums of money to the employers and artisans of Aix and of other places to induce them to come and settle in their city, and their offers, we are told, were accepted.⁵⁹ Great numbers of the Flemish Protestants, as has been already observed, took refuge after the war in Holland ; and under the name of Walloons, they were for several generations distinguished for their persevering and tasteful industry. To these the Dutch were probably indebted for the repute they gained in various additional branches of manufactures, such as lace and ribands, of which no particular mention is made prior to the seventeenth century ; and their tolerance and hospitality to the long-persecuted Jews were now destined to have their full reward. To these the Netherlanders had long been indebted for that superior skill in dyeing which sustained their early reputation for being able to endue fabrics both of

Immi-
grants.

⁵⁸ De Witt, Part I. ch. 11.

⁵⁹ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. pp. 72, 73.

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silk and wool with fast colours. While chemical knowledge was denounced as little short of impiety, the children of the East were left free to experimentalise without personal molestation, and to improve and extend their practical research;⁶⁰ and while the cabinets of kings and emperors were sore troubled by reason of "devil's dyes and deceitful logwood," their subjects were sending their white cloths to the Dutch to be dyed, for among them trade and science, industry and skill, were free. Nor did the benefit end there. When expanding commerce opened up new fields of enterprise, vast quantities of drugs and raw materials made use of in practical chemistry were imported for re-exportation as well as domestic consumption. The various sorts of each, thus collected together, afforded to the skilful experimentalist new means of comparison and suggested novel combinations, while their cheapness and abundance presented unusual facilities for putting these to the test.

Variety of
manufac-
tures.

Beside the old-established manufactures which, from the days of Charlemagne, had always given extensive employment to the population, there were added a number of others, whose diversity is not a little remarkable. The new branches of their fisheries and foreign trade suggested new kinds of manufacture. Among these are mentioned white lead, sel de saturn, minium, litharge, &c. The whale-fishery suggested others,—whale-bone, sper-

⁶⁰ Beckman, Vol. IV. p. 131.

maceti, chien-marin, and oil. The bleaching of all kinds of linen was carried to an extraordinary degree of perfection, which other countries vainly strove to emulate. Sugar-refineries, and the preparations of dye-stuffs, borax, and camphor, were carried on with peculiar skill and profit. The tariff of 1625 enumerates, among their exports of home-made commodities, velvets, ribands, camlets, serges, dimities, lace, carusel, thread, beads, leather, and paper, for all which they found a large consumption abroad.⁶¹ And such was the repute of their fabrics, and the superior facilities of their universal navigation and intercourse with other countries, that English and Flemish merchants often knew no better way to forward their goods to remote places than to send them first to Amsterdam, whence they were either re-exported, or purchased by the Dutch for their own consumption.⁶²

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Another highly important branch of their industry was ship-building. With this they had from the earliest times been familiar; and with the expansion of their commerce and the full development of their industrial spirit, it failed not to advance also. Not only all their own vessels, but a great number of the ships of burden belonging to other nations, were built in the dockyards of Zealand and Holland: and beside those built expressly for foreigners, a considerable number were constantly engaged in their service on hire.

From their great success in these diversified

Economy of
production.

⁶¹ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. pp. 72, 73.

⁶² De Witt, Part I. ch. 9; Temple, ch. 3.

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branches of industry, and the rapid accumulation of capital which took place in consequence, it is manifest that, as the absolute cost of materials and of labour could in no case have been peculiarly small, the economy of production must have been understood and practised with no ordinary skill. Their primary hindrances and struggles to make good their territory against the elements had implanted in the popular mind a sense of the value of mechanical art. Traditional feelings of gratitude to its power every where subsisted. Every parish had its mills to pump out water, to saw timber, or to grind corn; and, except the fickle winds that turned their arms, there was no motive power that had not been obtained by costly and laborious industry.

Natural
resources.

Let those who would have us believe that industrial greatness is dependent upon the possession of what they call "natural advantages," explain to us to which of these happy accidents or propitious circumstances the greatness of Dutch commerce is to be ascribed. If any fact in history seems clear it is this,—that of the raw materials needful for their shipping or their manufactures, their country produced not one. "Our country," says De Witt, "yields almost nothing out of its own bowels."⁶³ It supplied them with neither timber, hemp, nor tar, nor as much iron as would have made their fishing-hooks; their flax and wool of native growth would not have sufficed to clothe one in every household, and silk they had none. Above all, they never, at any

⁶³ De Witt, Part I. ch. 9

time during the last five centuries, possessed of home-growth sufficient food for one half the entire population. With respect to this remarkable fact there appears to be a singular unanimity among those who, differing on almost every other point, have written of the trade or the policy of Holland. Materials do not, indeed, exist for statistic statements regarding the amount of population, produce, or breadth of land under cultivation in the mediæval period; but the concurrent testimony of contemporary chroniclers and modern antiquarians, writers of political dissertation and of commercial history, confirms the traditional belief that the Seven Provinces neither produced nor were capable, at any assignable period, of producing sufficient food to sustain their inhabitants.

The utmost length of the United Provinces is usually stated at 190 miles, and the greatest breadth 120. Its total area may, consequently, be taken at 7,614,252 acres. But of this more than a fourth is irredeemably waste or covered with water, and of the residue a very large portion is from twenty to forty feet under the level of the sea.⁶⁴ How much of this, prior to the Revolution, was fit for tillage it were vain to inquire. Some districts of Guelderland were naturally prolific; but Zealand and Friesland yielded hardly any corn, and it was only by dint of unparalleled ingenuity, energy, and perseverance, that Holland was rendered productive.

⁶⁴ Malte-Brun, Book CLI.

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The graphic delineation of Guicciardini, whose duties as commissary of the imperial army led him to practical inquiry into the industrial condition of the Provinces, and whose fine taste and judgment enabled him to convey singularly vivid, and it is believed correct impressions of what he saw, is well worthy of recollection: "This little nook of a region abounds with inhabitants, opulence, virtue, and every thing else that it is possible to desire. Every corner of the land produces something; even the sand-hills where nothing but rabbits will live, and the salt marshes where the sea-fowl build their nests, furnish sources of profit to this indefatigable people, who collect and export great quantities of eggs to the southern provinces, for their whole life seems to be passed in infinitely varied labours." He intimates that many of their meadows wore the aspect of great luxuriance and yielded abundant crops, though only in particular districts. The cheese and butter of Holland were even then in such request elsewhere, that the revenue arising from the export duty thereon exceeded a million of florins.⁶⁵

Nevertheless there were found to be, in 1554, not above 300,000 morgens of arable land in the province, and in Zealand and Holland taken together there were, in 1584, hardly 500,000.⁶⁶ The greater part of this, moreover, was extremely poor, being, in many places, little better than sand, and

⁶⁵ Guicciardini, Tom. I. p. 57, &c.

⁶⁶ De Witt, Part I. ch. 31.

requiring almost every where to be “perpetually enriched by artificial means” to make it yield grass or corn.⁷⁰ CHAP.
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About the middle of the seventeenth century, when the commerce of the United Provinces was, perhaps, at the summit of prosperity, upwards of 200,000 persons were considered as living either upon agricultural profits or wages in Friezland and Holland.⁷¹ Assuming this calculation to be substantially correct, it implies no ordinary degree of agricultural industry and improvement. These were the lightest lands almost in Europe. Protection for their produce was unknown. Corn from Livonia, Germany, France, England, Spain, was not only free to come in at all times, but was actually brought in in almost incredible quantities for home use or re-exportation, as foreign or domestic demand required. Labour was not to be had without the payment of good wages; first, because there were manifold employments beside, in which, whoever would work might earn a comfortable livelihood, and, secondly, because a liberal and humane provision existed for the infirm poor. Neither could capital have been obtained for the purpose of a highly artificial mode of culture had it not yielded a steady and adequate return; for though in later days, from various causes, the interest of money fell singularly low, at the period in question foreign and colonial enterprise was in the flush of its unchecked triumph, and the manufactures, carry-

⁷⁰ De Witt, Part I. ch. 31.

⁷¹ Ibid. ch. 9.

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ing trade and fisheries, were at the zenith of prosperity.⁷² Yet the *sands* did not go out of cultivation. The land-owners lived on their estates and took pleasure and pride in their improvement. We have seen what manner of men they were, animated with the spirit of their country, with a little pardonable affectation of exotic tastes and manners, as some say;⁷³ but Dutch in their energy, sagacity, and perseverance, and Dutch also in the liberality of their ideas.

Laws re-
garding
tenure.

Not for the absence of a restrictive corn-law are the landed interest of Holland deserving of praise:—for it is hard to imagine how at the time we are speaking of they could by any means have obtained its enactment. The nation was in no humour then to listen to any such project; and had the States been convinced that half the fields of the Union must, without such factitious aid, have gone out of tillage, the representatives of the towns, whose wealth and population immensely outweighed those of the country,⁷⁴ would, doubtless, have said that they must go. But there were laws affecting land in which the mercantile classes of the community could have felt no such direct interest, and to whose wise modification the aristocracy might, doubtless, have opposed many obstacles. The tenures by which land had been held down to the period of the revolution, though differing, in some degree, from those of neighbouring kingdoms, were

⁷² La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. pp. 76–80.

⁷³ Temple, Ch. 4.

⁷⁴ De Witt, Part I. ch. 9.

still feudal, and, as such, stood in need of careful and comprehensive adaptation to the wants and feelings of a mercantile community, if town and country—trade and agriculture, were to exist together in harmony. Nay, agriculture itself required this change for its own sake. The old feudal tenancies, however mitigated in form,⁷⁵ were still essentially irreconcilable with industrial ideas. Tillage was no longer an occupation whereby a man raised food for himself and his family, and, in return for the use of his lord's land, was bound to fight his battles, sue in his court, and make him a present on stated occasions. Tillage was become a trade, dependent for its success on markets, tolls, cost of carriage, implements, seed, and many other things, which no man of intelligence and energy would apply himself to study for life, unless he could feel that the reward of his labour and the means and opportunities for labouring might be made secure. Without improving tenants, the competition of native produce with foreign supplies would have been vain; and without some certainty as to their position, without an adequate sense of independence and fixity, improving tenants could no longer have been found. Men would not devote their lives in a rigorous climate to the culture of an arid plain, if they could not feel a definite interest therein. Better go into the towns and spin, better go to sea and fish, better seek to share the hazards and gains of the Indies, than dwell at home powerless and dependent on the will of an irresponsible seigneur.

⁷⁵ Davies, Vol. I. p. 99.

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That the landed proprietary had the wisdom to discern their true interest and position in this matter is their just and rare praise. Others, like them, in other lands failed, deplorably for themselves, to learn the difficult lesson, that social changes to be safe must not be delayed until the consequences of their postponement begin to bear their bitter fruit. The *noblesse* of France would heed no warning, till "Terror" came and destroyed them all; and their peers of Prussia could only be taught by the terrible teaching of Jena!

Liberation
of land.

Of the details of the changes which were timely adopted in Holland, it is needless to speak. Being technical, they could hardly be made intelligible without tedious explanation. Their spirit is that which it is more important for us to note, and that we may gather from the condition of the country under their operation. The laws of inheritance were rendered more uniform throughout the Provinces; the power of disposing of landed property was greatly increased; the facilities for its acquisition by purchase were augmented, and its distribution among children was so often made in equal portions, that foreigners at a later time appear to have been under the impression that some principle like that of gavel-kind was generally and compulsorily operative.⁷⁶ The fact seems to have been that land had come to be looked upon like other kinds of property, as most certain of rising to its true value, and of maintaining it securely, when least subjected in

⁷⁶ Sir J. Child, *Discovery of Trade*, p. 7.

its disposal or transmission to arbitrary conditions. CHAP.
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 Freehold tenures still subsisted, and the power of limitation by demise was unquestioned. No attempt to compel equal distribution among children, irrespective of their wants or their deserts, was made. The estates of the nobles and the gentry continued to subsist without envy and without evil.⁷⁷ But other tenures were encouraged. Land was rendered purchasable. There were many small estates, and what would answer to our idea of fee-farms. Land was a marketable commodity, and, as such, had its market price. When Temple was in Holland, he was told that money would not bring more than two per cent if invested in land.⁷⁸ But we know how cautiously general statements of this description should be received; and it ought to be borne in recollection, that at the period in question capital had already begun to be redundant and that the weight of taxation, caused by the recent wars, was become unprecedentedly great.⁷⁹

But however this may be, we are left in no uncertainty as to the steady and profitable cultivation of the soil. Notwithstanding the proximity of prolific Belgium, and the unrestrained competition of other countries whose produce was admissible by sea, “the husbandmen of Holland were always able to sell all the product of their land to the other inhabitants that were manufacturers, traders, navigators, fishermen, and those that depended on them,

Market for
agricultural
produce.

⁷⁷ Temple, Ch. 4.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ La Richesse de la Hollande,
Tom. II. p. 50.

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which was a great advantage beyond what other agriculturists had. For, the great number of people that are not husbandmen are the only cause that those who are, though heavily taxed, are able to subsist."⁸⁰ Instead of fearing the increase of population in the towns, the prosperity of the agricultural classes was thus felt to depend on it. Their relative proportion in Friezland and Holland, in 1670, was estimated at eleven to one; but this is only given as an approximation to the fact for which no positive data existed; and the proportion must be considerably varied, by including the inland provinces, in which, though there were many large towns, the agricultural population bore a much higher ratio.

Population.

Population increased with unparalleled rapidity during the seventeenth century.⁸¹ Its first perceptible augmentation was that arising from the immigration from Flanders. Against this, however, may be set the annual drain to foreign settlements for trade or conquest that subsequently arose, and the amount of which it were hopeless to attempt to define. But the increase of population was, in the main, attributable to the activity of commerce and the facility of obtaining, not a mere subsistence, but the means of comfort and enjoyment. Of the necessities of life there was always an abundance, and at a moderate and equable rather than a very low rate. There were many countries where a man

⁸⁰ De Witt, Part I. ch. 9.

⁸¹ Ibid.

with an income to spend might live cheaper; perhaps there were few countries in Europe in which he could not; but in no country in the world was an income so easily or so certainly to be won by industry—nowhere could an intelligent, inventive, accomplished, learned, enterprising, or persevering man obtain so much in exchange for his labour. It was so in Guicciardini's time, it was so in Raleigh's, it was still more so in De Witt's. From the barrelling of herrings and gathering of the seabirds' eggs, to the polishing of diamonds⁸² and the fabrication of optical instruments, there was no branch of industry or art that was left untried or unpractised in that indefatigable land. Other nations could do some things better, but none, in the seventeenth century, could do so many things well. Other realms contained more arable land and more numerous inhabitants; but "the great Pensionary" could truly boast that "no country under Heaven of such limited dimensions sustained so many workmen and artificers of different callings."⁸³ Of the 2,400,000 persons who were supposed to constitute, in 1650, the total population, De Witt calculated that 650,000 lived by the manufacture of commodities intended for exportation, and as many more by the pursuit of those employments which ministered to domestic wants, including all manner of handicraft trades and what-

⁸² "Amsterdam est la ville de l'Europe où l'art de tailler les diamants a été porté au plus haut degré de perfection, et c'est celle

aussi où s'en fait le plus grand commerce."—*La Richesse de la Hollande*, Tom. I. p. 73.

⁸³ De Witt, Part I. ch. 6.

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ever else contributed to the pleasure, ease, or comfort of such as dwelt at home; 450,000, he supposed, lived by the sea-fisheries and the subordinate callings dependent thereon; 250,000, by navigation or the sailing for freight or trade, and the occupations immediately connected therewith; 200,000, by agriculture, and the like number by public employments, civil or military, by the rent of land or money at interest, and by the tax levied to support the poor.⁸⁴

Condition
of the
people.

The great question then remains—not merely how was food regularly supplied for this multitude, that all of them should have a little, but had they more of the comforts and luxuries of life than the mass of other communities were usually able to obtain? For to rest satisfied with knowing merely, that from year to year and from sire to son, they continued to exist, were to know nothing worth knowing of them. One need not read or think to be convinced that the continuance of a people's existence for centuries is possible, without the attainment of more physical comfort than is needful to maintain, undiminished, the race of brutes that perish. A people may toil without reward, may live without improvement, may multiply without growing strong, and become capable of all that elevates, dignifies, and blesses civilised being, yet suffer worse privations than those of savage life—the ills of beggary at the gate of wealth, of perpetual tantalisation in the presence of intrinsically cheap, yet practically

⁸⁴ De Witt, Part I. ch. 8.

unattainable, enjoyments. Did we only know that Holland was productive and populous, what would it avail us as an example? We need to know much more. Unless the toil we hear of were better recompensed, and the enjoyments, and comforts, and embellishments of life, for the production of which it was set in motion, were diffused more abundantly among those who toiled than among those who were less diligently employed, should we not be tempted to exclaim, that whatever the glory or greatness of the country might be their labour was in vain? But not to this disheartening end does the industrial history of a free people lead. The Dutch had made themselves a country, and made themselves free, that in that country they might uninterruptedly pursue the industry without which neither country nor freedom had ever been. And they had their reward.

Of the condition of the upper and middle classes, it is hardly necessary to speak. Before the revolutionary war they were already opulent. Their houses, especially in the towns, were rich in carved furniture and plate; and there were not a few of the burghers who, when they would do honour to a guest, had the table served wholly with silver. They were given much to hospitality; and their hostelries and taverns were so many and so good—more than any other country in Europe contained—that they were rather too often led into conviviality.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Guicciardini, Tom. I. p. 153.

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Wine and
beer.

A.D. 1364.

Sumptuary
laws.

Great quantities of wine were annually imported for home consumption from France and the Rhine. Breweries were every where numerous and profitable; and the *gruit-gild*, or malt-tax, was a fruitful source of revenue, no mean test of the progress in popular means of comfort when taken in conjunction with many other things. It is highly characteristic, moreover, that the Dutch should have been the first to bethink them of an expedient for saving the great waste to which beer was liable without some preservative ingredient. The use of hops was formerly unknown, but, upon trial, it was found so successful that the discovery quickly spread. Whereupon certain of the rulers endeavoured to interpose their authority, with the usual instinct of mischief that seems for ever to inspire such interferences. The Bishop of Utrecht made a complaint to the Emperor, Charles IV., that his revenues were injured by the use "of a certain plant called humulus, or hoppa," in brewing, inasmuch as the quantity of malt consumed was within the space of forty years very much decreased; and his majesty, sagaciously judging, that if beer could be made to keep, that was no reason why the people should have the benefit thereof, granted powers to the Bishop to lay on a compensating tax on hops.⁸⁶

Sumptuary laws usually mark those periods of

⁸⁶ Beckmann, Vol. IV. p. 337.

transition when a nation hitherto frugal in its habits and simple in its ideas of enjoyment, begins to find many new luxuries suddenly brought within its reach by foreign trade. It was so in classic times, and afterwards in feudal. In England and Germany, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, laws prescribing certain kinds of dress were repeatedly enacted; and, however futile or arbitrary they may have been in their day, we derive some benefit from them in the way of information; for we look to them now as helps to discover the state of commerce in a variety of articles at the time. Had the rich furs of Russia not become abundant and comparatively cheap in the stores of Hamburgh and London, we should have heard nothing of the imperial and parliamentary regulations touching what manner of folk might indulge in ermine, and who should content themselves with weasel-skin.⁸⁷ Sump-
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A.D. 1338.
A.D. 1497.
 tuary regulations, however, were rarely attempted in the Netherlands, and it is not unworthy of note that, even during the struggle with Spain, when an attempt was made by the States to raise an extra tax on gold and silver thread used in articles of dress, and its expediency was defended on the ground that it would tend to restrain improvident display, feelings of discontent were so strongly manifested that the duty was obliged to be abandoned. The weighty imposts were loyally paid; but the Dutch

⁸⁷ Statute of Edward III., 1336; Beckmann, Vol. IV. p. 232.

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XII.Lighting
the streets.

would not tolerate this legislative “meddling” with trade or custom.⁸⁸

Our ideas of the comparative degree of comfort possessed by any people in past times are necessarily formed from minute and intrinsically unimportant circumstances which have fortuitously been preserved. Far from despising the contributive items of information which may thus be gathered from incidental notices and unconnected observations, we shall do well to collect and arrange them, as the students of natural science treasure their splinters of coral reefs and flies in amber. Were historic study thus pursued, a thousand facts, which seem to have no significancy, would acquire an expressive look and meaning; we should be enabled to trace with better insight and comprehension the vicissitudes and struggles of mankind in ages that have passed away, and derive more encouragement and warning from their social and industrial fortune. Does it tell us nothing, for instance, of the civilisation of the Dutch, that in 1552, when the streets of none of the royal capitals of Europe, Paris and London perhaps excepted, were publicly lighted, the municipal authorities of the Hague were accustomed to see that the inhabitants set lamps before their doors during the dark nights; and that, subsequently, small stone pillars were erected at the corners of the streets, on which lights were kept

⁸⁸ Davies, Vol. II. p. 303.

burning? About the same time Amsterdam was lighted at the public charge.⁸⁹ Many other things, illustrative of the manners and habits of the period, might be instanced to the same effect. Amongst the rest, the facilities of locomotion which the natural and artificial water-ways of the country afforded, in a degree wholly unrivalled.⁹⁰

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Before the invention of printing, the difficulties in the way of literature were necessarily great. The age and the means of leisure for any extensive class had not yet come. Men's energies were fitly absorbed with the rougher work of clearing and forming the foundations of national greatness, without which letters and arts may come to soothe or tantalise, but they can never grow up as from a healthy and indigenous root. Nevertheless, we find at all times an esteem for books and information, a wish to teach and a desire to learn in many classes of the community. Even the invention of printing itself has been contended for by the citizens of Haarlem, who still recite, with pride, the tale of Laurence John, the good churchwarden, who carved little pictures and explanatory sentences on blocks of beech-wood, and with them printed tiny lesson-books for his grandchildren.⁹¹ Is it necessary for the fame of Schœffer or Faust to displace so pleasant and suggestive a tradition?

Invention
of printing.

Whencesoever derived, the art of printing rapidly became an object of anxious solicitude in the Ne-

Prohibi-
tions of
printing.

⁸⁹ Beckmann, Vol. III. p. 392.

⁹¹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 257.

⁹⁰ Guicciardini, Tom. II. p. 154.

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therlands. Its electric power was used to rouse, unite, and arm the revolvers against Alva ; and its facilities were subsequently found invaluable in the conduct of the popular cause by the circulation of intelligence and instructions. Printing was accordingly prohibited. The Council of Troubles knew where their danger lay, and diligently laboured to meet it. And could they have written to their master, as a certain governor of Virginia did, in the following century, to Charles II., "Thank God, there is not a school, nor any printing-press in the province,"—they might have probably added his undertaking that come what might, he would hold the province in obedience to the king.⁹²

The ministers of Philip did what they could ; they burnt all books not published by authority, and finding that of no avail they burnt those that printed them. All to no purpose. Printing and publishing went on as pertinaciously as ever : nay, what must have direly moved the wrath of loyal persecutors, clerical and lay, these primitive printers would only print what they liked themselves, or what their customers liked ; whereby orthodox principles, in the pamphlet and *placart* form, must have quite gone out of sight, had they not providently been printed by authority ;—all which served to encourage printing, and spread that destructive pestilence.⁹³

⁹² Beverley, Hist. of Virginia, p. 67.

⁹³ Bentivoglio, Part II. book 1.

Once practically conversant with its operations, and conscious of its inestimable worth as a means of employment, profit, information, and freedom, the Netherlanders set about its developement and perfection with their characteristic energy and skill. It may be said of them, that there was no invention which they did not labour to apply, and no art which they did not successfully endeavour to improve. Printing may be adduced as one example. The first types were clumsy ; they made them more compact. The ink originally used was either costly, or subject to fade ; but they were practical chemists, and good economists, and soon found out how cheap and durable ink might be made. The manufacture of paper had previously been so insignificant in extent as to attract little capital or care. They devoted both to its production, and thus supplied another essential element of the new branch of national industry—the publication of books. During the seventeenth century the publication of books, not only for native use in the Dutch language, but for exportation to other countries, in French and Latin, became an important branch of national industry. Men of taste and learning undertook to form extensive establishments, in which were congregated the most skilful hands, and from which were issued, from time to time, those admirable editions of the classic authors, many of which are still unsurpassed by the editorial and typographic accuracy of our own day. In the production of so many works a vast number of

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Book trade.

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persons found remunerative employment, not merely as printers, but as type-founders, paper-makers, binders, engravers, copperplate-makers, — besides all those who were engaged in the export and retail trades.”⁹⁴

Literature.

Periodical publications, also, if not originating among the Dutch, came earlier into popular use amongst them than any other people. How many of these have perished even in name, or are only known to have answered their ephemeral purpose without leaving any trace behind—it were vain to conjecture. Others, however, in the nature of monthly or weekly registers of passing events, are still preserved, some in Dutch, and others in French,⁹⁵ with which the upper and middle classes were generally familiar. Compared with publications intended to serve a similar purpose in France or England at the time, the style and substance of these journals are very remarkable. But the causes are not doubtful. Holland recognised, in a wider sense than any other country of Europe, the liberty of the press;⁹⁶ the materials of printing were peculiarly cheap and good; and there was a free, intelligent, and affluent public to buy and read whatever was useful or attractive, amongst whom literary labour was not a questionable trade, separate and scorned, but a

⁹⁴ *La Richesse de la Hollande*, Tom. II. p. 409.

⁹⁵ Of these the most generally known is, *La Mercur Hollandois*, originally published in

monthly parts, but also in small volumes, 12mo.

⁹⁶ *La Richesse de la Hollande*, Tom. II. p. 411.

source of legitimate influence, and an accomplishment to which men of other avocations were proud to aspire. Grotius and Borre were lawyers and statesmen,—Plancius and Episcopius were parochial ministers,—and Meteren, Brandt, and Hooft, the historians, and Vondel the poet, were merchants. The eminent scholars, Vossius, Gronovius, Heinsius, and Erasmus, were fitly occupied in public instruction.⁹⁷ Around them were gathered many distinguished men of other countries, whom the liberty of printing induced to make their abode in Holland. Among these may be mentioned Huet and Bagnage. Few departments of science have not been indebted for important discoveries to the Dutch. In the history of ethics Spinoza's name will never be forgotten; and the reputation of Boerhaave as a naturalist and physician was pre-eminent throughout Europe in his day. The invention of the telescope is claimed for Jansen of Middleberg, as its improvement and successful application is ascribed to Huygens. The first attempt to convey intelligence by means of the telegraph is attributed to Theodore Cornputte, the commander of Steenwyck, a small town of Overijssel, which was besieged by the Spaniards in 1580;⁹⁸ and the elaborate works of Koehorn on defensive strategy and fortifications were long esteemed as military text-books.

While the Dutch signalised their national emancipation by the extension of so many useful arts,

Painting
on glass.

⁹⁷ Davies, Vol. II. p. 668.

⁹⁸ Ibid. Vol. III. p. 398.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 100, note.

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they failed not to make good their claim to originality and taste. The art of painting on glass seems to have had a peculiar charm for the inhabitants of the Low Countries, and their immediate neighbours, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Persons of quality studied it as an accomplishment, and we are told that Rene, Duke of Lorraine, sought to beguile the tedium of his confinement at Dijon, where he was held captive, in 1431, by Charles the Bold, by painting portraits upon glass, some of which were preserved for the admiration of later times in the chapel of Chartreux.¹⁰⁰

Church
windows.

The stained windows of the Netherland churches were deemed the most beautiful in Europe; and it was their demolition, at the Hague, Leyden, Middleberg, and Ypres, in 1566, when the people were exasperated by the forcible dispersion of their open-air meetings held for worship, that is said to have determined the cabinet of Madrid to send Alva on his mission of vengeance.¹⁰¹ But these outrages were the work of a few hours, and being indignantly reprobated by all that was wise or influential in the popular party, we hardly hear of an attempt at any similar violence afterwards. The spirit of the Revolution was essentially conservative, not destructive: its cause—the violation of accustomed rights, its result—the cautious re-edification of public order with as little deviation as possible from the ancient way. The Dutch were,

¹⁰⁰ Barante, Hist. Bourg. Tom. VI. p. 176.

¹⁰¹ Davies, Vol. I. p. 530.

as a people, true and wise reformers. However lamentable the fanatical excesses of a day, they were certainly no political iconoclasts. Needless change seemed to them sheer folly; the abruption of old ties, however originating, a serious evil; the overthrow of legal order, a hideous dream. We have seen how tardily they renounced allegiance to the worst of kings—how anxiously they sought to replace him with the royalty of France or England. Even after that, they desired not to obliterate ancient honours. In the church of St. Katherine at Amsterdam, a painted window chronicled the compliment paid by the Emperor Maximilian, when he gave the Hollanders an imperial crown as their crest in heraldry.¹⁰² On the renunciation of allegiance to his graceless successor, it would have been a Jacobin point of honour to efface all such recollections from the national memory. But the Dutch were no Jacobins. Destruction of any sort was an offence unto them. They were a thoughtful, grateful, remembering people, not a brawling mob ashamed of their fathers, or goaded to acts of feminine frenzy by the recollection of what they themselves had been. This storied pane had proud reminiscences for them, nothing to be ashamed of. So they let it stand—the effigy of that crown under which, while endurable, their forefathers loyally lived—which, when it became a symbol of tyranny, they humbled in the dust!

¹⁰² Hermann Moll, Vol. III. p. 581.

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Painting.

In the more diversified branches of the art, there were many students among the Dutch in the days of the Empire. The productions of their Flemish brethren had filled them with emulation. Before the civil war, pictures were often to be seen in the houses of the nobles and wealthy burgesses of Holland; and even while it lasted, the pursuit of the arts was not altogether neglected.¹⁰³ But the choicest and most luxuriant garlands were reserved for the glad noon of triumph; Haarlem could boast of having given birth to Wynants and Berghem, Wouvermans and Hobbima; while Leyden viewed with equal pride the works of Rembrandt, Douw, and Peter Gerard, who was called the second Vandyke. Gorcum produced Vander Heyden and Bloemart; while Utrecht claimed the brothers Both, and Embden gloried in Backhuysen. Then followed an illustrious train, Mieris, Jan Steen, Paul Potter, Vandervelde, Cuyp, and Ruysdael, each master of a different kind of art, but each in that unrivalled.¹⁰⁴

The Dutch
school of
painting.

With those who would disparage the power and beauty of the works which these great artists have bequeathed to their country and the world, on the ground that they were not conceived or executed in the manner of the Italian school, it were out of place to enter into discussion here. The gist of all such cavils seems to be, that national expression

¹⁰³ Pilkington, Dict. &c.

¹⁰⁴ All of these flourished between the close of the sixteenth

and the end of the seventeenth century.—See Smith, Catalogue of Dutch Painters, *passim*.

and indigenous art is an inferior thing to correct imitation of a foreign standard, that heart-spoken eloquence is less admirable than good mimicry, that to cherish and to call forth sympathy, is less worthy of genius than the affectation of exotic taste and feeling. Happily for themselves and for posterity, the gifted artists of the Netherlands knew better wherein their duty lay to their art and to their country. They loved both and served both eminently, because honestly and as true men. Knowing that in Italy the highest triumphs of the pencil and the chisel were to be seen, they longed to gaze on them, and in several instances endured sore privations to attain their purpose.¹⁰⁵ Conscious that in the schools of Venice and Bologna, they could derive invaluable lessons in the different branches of their vocation, many of them tarried long years there in obscurity, and poverty, and exile, for the sake of instruction. But the days of their tutelage being ended, they returned to their native land to apply all the skill they had acquired elsewhere to the delineation of its peculiar scenes and ways of life—to immortalise the calm, earnest features of its wise and good men, and the heroism and gallantry of its brave men. How thoroughly they appreciated the nature of the work it was appointed them to do, and how gloriously they performed it, let the love with which their names are mentioned by their own countrymen attest, and the anxiety which is displayed amongst every

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¹⁰⁵ Pilkington, Dictionary of Painters, *passim*.

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cultivated people of our own day to possess even their smallest productions.

Progress.

The earlier efforts of the Dutch school were deficient in grace, freedom, and life. The mind of the country did not yet thoroughly know itself. It was willing to hope for much, but it was forced to fear more. There was heartiness and healthfulness in its love of improvement and enjoyment; but there was also a sense of restraint, industrial, social, and political, from which it were hard to imagine that the sensitive nature of art could be wholly free. But in the collisions of interests and opinions, this fetter was knapped, and when the artist dreamed, visions of high effort, distant enterprise, intrepid fortitude, chivalrous daring, golden and populous plains, uninterrupted revels, and the lofty monuments of national redemption, crowded thick upon his brain.

The artist.

The artist was no longer a burgher of his native town, but a citizen of the commonwealth. If his early attachments still demanded the grateful devotion of his best efforts to its adornment, his imagination no longer wanted air, for his power was no longer a civic prisoner on parol, his ambition had a national aim, and he had a national reputation for his reward. Neither was the change of social means and habits unimportant. The increase of commercial and manufacturing wealth created, or rather greatly extended, the class of those who could afford the luxury of possessing a fine picture. How far this tended to direct the painter in his choice of

subjects it were difficult to conjecture. But we know for certain, that industrial intelligence stimulated that of every other kind; that a growing taste for literature and art began to be evinced, and leisure and wealth, created by free and self-rewarding labour, was liberally devoted to the enjoyment of desires fitted to elevate and refine the tone of national sentiment.

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No accurate calculation can be formed of the wealth of the Provinces at any given period. We know that in the year of Charles V.'s accession, the capitation-tax was paid in the province of Holland by not more than 172,000 persons; but from this assessment the nobles, clergy, and persons receiving public alms, were exempted, and their proportional numbers cannot be ascertained. Equally unsatisfactory are the materials for forming an estimate of the fixed property liable to taxation. In the year above alluded to about 200,000 acres, and 35,000 houses only were assessed under the land and house-tax in Holland. Here, in like manner, we lack information of the extent of ecclesiastical and noble properties, both of which were exempted, and of waste lands.¹⁰⁷ Yet Holland, even then, is described as possessing an amount of opulence and comfort wholly unrivalled. Within a circuit of sixty leagues it contained twenty-nine walled cities, many open towns, and 400 villages. Every spot seemed to produce something, and the dense population are

Wealth of
the Dutch.

¹⁰⁷ Davies, Vol. I. p. 351.

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portrayed as full of business and energy. The nobles dwelt in the country without envy or reproach; the homes of the merchants were in the large towns, and contained a greater variety of plate, tapestry, paintings, fine linen, and beautiful furniture of wood and brass, than was to be found in a similar number of dwellings in any other country of Europe.¹⁰⁸ All this indicates a state of affluence, and civilisation in which the consumption of the luxuries and necessities of life must have been unusually large. What, then, must it have been in the sunny noontide of Dutch prosperity and power!

Condition
of the
working-
classes.

The condition of the working-classes may be best inferred from the fact, that while their numbers continued to increase, the supply of all the prime necessities of life continued to increase also, and the wages of labour, if they did not absolutely rise, were generally considered higher than those which were given in any neighbouring country. With respect to the former, the evidence is striking and important. "Could we suppose the entire land sown with wheat, and that every morgen produced fifteen sacks, it yet would not yield a pound of bread per diem to each individual in Holland. If the Dutch nation did not, therefore, by their industry, create many manufactures, and, by their persevering skill, did not reap much profit from the sea, the country were not worth inhabiting by men, not even though they

¹⁰⁸ Guicciardini, Tom. I. p. 59.

were few in number, and no subsidies or taxes were paid by them for government or national defence. But Holland being, on the other hand, densely peopled, and burdened with an unparalleled weight of fiscal obligations, it is absolutely indispensable that the country should be so inhabited as to be able to bear its burdens. And as Holland cannot sustain herself, she must always seek food from abroad."¹⁰⁹ Elsewhere, De Witt estimates the entire produce of the cultivated lands in Friezland and Holland as inadequate to supply one-eighth part of the population of the Union.¹¹⁰ Yet far from deploring the increase of population, he regarded it as an unspeakable blessing to the land that there were so many people in it, and advised an adherence to the old policy of doing every thing that might induce foreigners of worth and skill to come and settle there.¹¹¹

Nor was he alone in this opinion. A very able writer of a previous period says, that among the evils which might be anticipated from a diminution of foreign trade, none could be greater than a decrease of population.¹¹² And the greatest authority of later times, on subjects connected with the industrial history of the Dutch, eloquently maintains that a decrease of population was at once a cause and consequence of a decrease in commerce.¹¹³ Raleigh, Temple, and Child, appear to have been of the same

¹⁰⁹ De Witt, Part I. ch. 9.¹¹⁰ Ibid. ch. 5.¹¹¹ Ibid.¹¹² More Excellent Observa-

tions on the Affairs of Holland, p. 5. Published in 1609.

¹¹³ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. II. p. 393.Free trade
in corn.

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sentiments, and all concur in applauding the policy of an unrestricted import of grain. Vast stores of foreign corn were always to be found at Amsterdam and other trading ports; and when Sigismund III. threatened to withhold the yearly supply of corn, if the States declined his mediation on behalf of Spain, they coolly replied, that Poland could as ill afford not to sell as the Provinces not to buy its surplus grain. When other nations wanted supplies, they were accustomed to go there for them; and it happened frequently, that sterile Holland became the granary of France, England, Spain, and Italy.¹¹⁴ National conviction sustained this wise policy. On one occasion, during war, when the weight of taxation fell more heavily than usual, and foreign trade being interrupted, prices fell much below their ordinary level, the agricultural inhabitants of Groningen, Guelderland, and Zealand, were induced to forget the ancient maxims of the State, and to petition for a protective duty on corn. The States-General refused to take such a question into consideration, as implying an abandonment of the fundamental principles of the commonwealth, and told the petitioners that they could only regard their request as “an absurdity.”¹¹⁵

Wages.

The mass of the people were accustomed to substantial and abundant food, and what, in such a climate as theirs, formed an essential ingredient of comfort—plenty of turf and fire-wood. Even in times

¹¹⁴ Davies, Vol. II. p. 310.¹¹⁵ Ibid. Vol. III. p. 392.

of depression, "it was not to be expected that the operatives would be content without their butter, cheese, and beer, and a sufficiency of fuel."¹¹⁶ With regard to wages: "I affirm, and can prove," writes Sir Josiah Child, "that the Dutch give generally more wages to *all* their manufacturers, by at least twopence in the shilling, than the English do." He argues, that where wages are high it is an evidence of the riches of that country; and wherever wages for labour run low, it is a proof of the poverty of that country, and that England would have "many more good workmen if our laws gave them fitting encouragement." And what he meant by "fitting encouragement" we gather from his enumeration of the things to which the prosperity of the Dutch was attributable. The catalogue is brief and curious:—1, that they have merchants in their government; 2, just laws of inheritance; 3, an honest and "exact making of all their native commodities, so that the repute of them abroad always continues good;" 4, great encouragement to new inventions; 5, cheaply built shipping, and low freights; 6, thrifty habits of living; 7, sound practical education of both sexes; 8, low customs, the revenue being raised chiefly by duties on consumption; 9, a generous provision for, and employment of, the poor; 10, a good banking system; 11, the perfect toleration of all religions; 12, the "cheap and expeditious law merchant;" 13, the law which

¹¹⁶ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. II. p. 400.

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renders bills of exchange negotiable; 14, a public registry of property and securities; and finally, the low interest legally chargeable for money.¹¹⁷ Some of these topics have already been adverted to; of others a word or two may not be deemed out of place.

Respect
paid to
labour.
A.D. 1667.

The legend of the "Golden Fleece" had at last come to be practically realised. The magistrates of Amsterdam were on the watch for opportunities to encourage industry. They allowed two years for the payment of the fees chargeable on the acquisition of the rights of citizenship to the artisans from other places who came to settle there; and, what was still better, they endeavoured, by the conferring personal distinction on the workmen of merit, to incite among them an honourable emulation. Thus in 1668 certain of the silk-weavers were assigned a place in the churches along with the directors of the hospitals and other public institutions; for the Dutch believed that "to shew respect for trade, and for those who lived by it, was one of the most effectual means within their power to make it flourish."¹¹⁸

Pamphlets
on trade.

In the dearth of accurate information regarding the social and economical progress of society, and the contemptuous neglect of all such details by the battle and intrigue chroniclers, even of comparatively modern times, one is driven to the byeways of history, to brief tracts and unconnected pamphlets,—wearisome enough in most cases, and leading no

¹¹⁷ Discovery of Trade, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 497.

whither but to interminable quagmire, or jungle of impenetrable crotchets (long since withered away, or overgrown by a later growth),—but sometimes, also, leading one gaily and cheerily along, and occasionally affording us striking views of the peaceful industry and comfort, or the humble suffering and unheeded wants of the time. If ever the industrial history of England shall be written with the care and completeness it deserves, a collection of these pamphlets will furnish materials of no ordinary interest and value on all manner of topics, and minute details of trade. Very frequently, too, comparisons, the result of personal observation, between the condition of neighbouring countries at particular periods, may thus be found,—to be adopted, doubtless, with much reserve and caution, but still in the prevalent ignorance and darkness, well worthy of attention.

An illustration of what is here alluded to may be found in a little tract published in the reign of Charles I., and entitled “England’s Safety in Trade’s Increase.”¹¹⁹ The author labours diligently to shew how many opportunities lay unimproved, both of domestic and foreign industry; and instances how “the Hollanders who had very little corn of their own sowing, yet eat as much bread as we do; how they who have no sheep to shear, yet make cloaths as good and cheap as we do; nay, how they serve foreign markets with our own cloth

CHAP.
XII.

Sugges-
tion of
courts-
merchant.

¹¹⁹ By Henry Robinson, Gent. London, 1641.

CHAP. XII. (and with fish caught upon our own coast) upon better terms than we can.”¹²⁰ He then sets forth a course of remedies of existing ills and defects, many of them not the wisest, but others worthy of more heed than any suggestions on the subject had then much chance of receiving. Among the latter was one for “the erecting of a new court, or magistracy, consisting of merchants, where all merchant-like causes and differences should be summarily decided without appeal (save in special cases),—to the end that knaves and litigious persons may be deterred from moving suits without good ground, or withholding any thing that belongs to another. This court, for very good reason, ought to consist of merchants; in regard a merchant, of good natural endowments, bred at least a competent grammar scholar, having lived abroad, and being experienced in customs and affairs of sundry countries, may questionless be generally a more knowing man than any other of what profession soever, and so better qualified for deciphering the intricate and various difficulties which seem to many as dark, obscure hieroglyphics; for as the mystery of merchants is more subtle and active, suddenly multiplying contracts infinitely beyond all others, so do spring from thence more knotty and abstruse differences, and disputes far better understood, and consequently to be judged and ended by understanding merchants:—yet happily the assistance of a

¹²⁰ England's Safety in Trade's Increase, pp. 8, 14.

skilful civilian might not do amiss, to be subordinate to the merchants, for otherwise he may likely have too much sway, and with his voluble tongue over-talk the merchants, and run away with the cause. A special care such court should have to despatch each cause with all possible expedition, for these of all other can worst admit demurrers; because, either the commodities which merchants strive about are perishable, or ships must go on their voyages, and mariners may not tarry behind, or the very time eats out eight in the hundred from the sums in controversy: thus merchants are of all others the least able to attend lawsuits."¹²¹ There are few mercantile men of our own day to whom these words, thus quaintly uttered two hundred years ago, will not sound like the ring of true metal. Yet the grievance and want of our fathers is still ours.

Not so among the Dutch. Nearly a century and a half before, we find courts-merchant established for the more speedy disposal of controversies between strangers trading to the ports of Holland and the inhabitants of other countries.¹²² For they knew how much commerce depended upon probity and justice.¹²³ Similar tribunals are to be traced among the Italian communities of the Middle ages, and those of the Hanse League. It would seem, indeed, as if the courts-merchant of Holland had in De Witt's time fallen into disuse,

Law of
debtor and
creditor.

¹²¹ England's Safety in Trade's Increase, pp. 25, 34.

¹²² Yair, p. 93.

¹²³ De Witt, Part I. ch. 25.

CHAP.
XII.

from what causes we know not, for, when reviewing the existing administration of justice, he urges strongly the advantage that would accrue from their resuscitation with ample powers.¹²⁴ To some extent, perhaps, "the Peacemakers,"¹²⁵ or court of equitable arbitration, served the purpose in question. But the need of a jurisdiction so constituted was the more obvious in a country where the law of debtor and creditor was beyond comparison the most lenient then in existence. "Never was there such large credit given to all sorts of persons as in Holland, and never any country where so few languish in prison."¹²⁶ In 1721, those confined for debt in Amsterdam were not more than five-and-twenty, —a trifling number for a city which had at least as many traders as London: and the same lenity was observed all over the Province;¹²⁷ and the merciful principles which have within the last few years been adopted in our own law of bankruptcy, were at the period in question fully established and approved there.

Toleration.

It is curious and instructive to contrast the opinions of two such men as Temple and De Witt, writing on the same subject about the same time, and to observe how differently the same objects appear when regarded with feelings differently trained, and habituated to different social and political institutions. Both were deeply imbued

¹²⁴ De Witt, Part I. ch. 25.

¹²⁵ See Chap. X. p. 47.

¹²⁶ Batavia Illustr. Part. I. p. 64.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

with the love of toleration; but their personal experience had been the most opposite. Temple's philosophic temper and easy good-nature was weary of the war of hostile sects in England. In their competing violence and cruelty he saw but misery and mischief. The comparative tolerance and religious equality of the Netherlands filled him naturally with delight, and hence the unqualified eulogy he has recorded of what, doubtless, seemed to him a blessed and faultless system. Let us give him credit also for desiring, by the charm of the picture he drew of religious freedom in Holland, to win the minds of his own countrymen to a conviction of its superior policy and justice.¹²⁷

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But De Witt, who had been reared amid this state of things, and who had never witnessed the open conflict of religious factions, viewed the matter in a wholly different light. Fully alive to the advantage his country derived from its greater freedom in respect of conscience than any neighbouring state, he deplored every aberration from the rule of thorough and entire toleration. The Catholics were then obliged to pay a small tax annually, in order to enjoy their liberty, which he deemed no less unjust than detrimental to the land: for if they were treated with more perfect equality, "peace and amity would increase more and more, and true religion too."¹²⁸ The old law of 1583, whereby the evangelical or Calvinist creed was established, and the celebration of other forms of worship was forbidden,

Remnant
of penal
laws against
Catholics.

¹²⁷ Temple, chap. 5.

¹²⁸ De Witt, Part I. ch. 18.

CHAP.
XII.

had never been repealed ; and during the religious strife of 1612 and 1620, between the predominant church and the Arminians, or Remonstrants, the evil principle of this law had been for a season resuscitated. But, in the days of De Witt and Temple, the idea of persecution was grown obsolete. Catholics, Arminians, and all other sects, enjoyed security, and practically the free exercise of their religion. And we are told by another English traveller in Holland that, "though numerous among the peasants, and considerable in the towns, the Catholics seemed to be a sound piece of the state, and fast joined in with the rest ; and neither gave any disturbance to the government, nor expressed any inclination to a change, or to any foreign power."¹²⁹

Temple's brilliant panegyric is too well known to need citation. Mackintosh wrote in the margin of his own copy, "All the modern encomiums on religious liberty have added little to this."¹³⁰ A remark contained in a private letter strikingly confirms his more elaborate statement. Travelling incognito, in 1667, to the Hague, "the chief pleasure he had was to observe the strange freedom that all men took in boats, and inns, and all other common places, of talking openly whatever they thought upon all public affairs."¹³¹

¹²⁹ A Voyage to Holland in 1690, Harleian Misc. Vol. II. p. 600.

¹³⁰ Courtenay, Memoirs of Temple, Vol. I. p. 394.

¹³¹ To his father, 10th Oct. 1667.—Works, Vol. I. p. 286.

CHAPTER XIII.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN POLICY.

“This country is the fat of the world, full of veins and blood, and no bones in it. The land they have they keep as neat as a courtier does his beard, and the boor looks as smug as a lady that hath newly laid by her colours and curling-irons. The lining of the house is more rich than the outside, not in hangings, but pictures, which even the poorest are furnished with: not a cobbler but has his toys for ornament. Sailors among them are as common as beggars with us. Most Hollanders are seamen born, — not a countryman but can handle an oar, and raise a mast. An infinity of sails are seen every where coursing up and down on the canals leading, not only to every great town, but almost to every village. An industrious man thus loses no time—he writes, or eats, or sleeps, as he goes; and the time of industrious men is the greatest native commodity of any country.”¹³²

SOMETHING remains to be said of the external relations of the Dutch with their neighbours, and with more distant and dissimilar nations, after their attainment of independence. Abroad as well as at home we shall find industrial ideas animating and governing their policy.

CHAP.
XIII.

THE
DUTCH.

¹³² A Voyage to Holland in 1690, by an English Gentleman attending the court of King William.—Harl. Misc. Vol. II. p.590.

CHAP.
XIII.Cornelius
Houtman.

Previous to their assertion of national independence, the commerce of the Dutch did not extend beyond the confines of Europe. But new regions of traffic were now to open to their dauntless enterprise. It was in 1594, that Cornelius Houtman, the son of a brewer at Gouda, returned from Lisbon, where, having passed the preceding year, he had seen the gorgeous produce of the East piled on the quays of the Tagus. His descriptions fired the emulation of his friends at Amsterdam, nine of whom agreed to join stock and equip a little flotilla for a voyage round the Cape of Good Hope; Houtman undertook the command, and thus the marvellous commerce of the Dutch in India began.¹³³

Commerce
with India.

The influence which their trade with India and their settlements there exerted in maturing and extending the greatness of the Dutch, has often been overrated. It was a source, indeed, of infinite pride, and for a time of rapid and glittering profit; but it was attended with serious drawbacks, both of national expenditure and national danger. Could they have started as mere traders to the East and maintained themselves under a neutral flag, the case would have been different. But from the outset they were forced to go armed. The four ships that sailed on the first voyage of speculation from Amsterdam, in 1595, were fitted out for either war or merchandise.¹³⁴ They were about to sail into hitherto interdicted waters; they knew that the Portuguese were already established in the Spice

¹³³ La Rich. de la Holl. Tom. I. p. 49. ¹³⁴ Davies, Vol. II. p. 290.

Islands, whither they were bound ; and Portugal was then a dependency of Spain. On their arrival at Java, they had, consequently, to encounter open hostility both from Europeans and the natives whom the former influenced against them. At Bali, however, they were better received ; and, in 1597, they reached home with a rich cargo of spices and Indian wares.

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XIII.

It was a proud and joyous day in Amsterdam when their return was known. The King of Spain had grudged them leave to dwell in their poor farm, and lo ! they had found the way into the heart of his richest and best-preserved demesne ! His ? Nay, was it not theirs as well, if they could win the natives of the East to trust and deal with them ? They were resolved to try. The spirit of defiance, called forth by Philip's claim to exclusive rights of navigation in the Indian Seas, is vividly expressed in a Dutch pamphlet of the time.¹³⁵ " That we Batavians, whose living dependeth on the sea, and that are the best merchants and seafaring men in the whole world, should be debarred from the free use of the greatest part of the ocean, the use whereof is, *jure gentium*, free for all men, is the greatest presumption that can be imagined. This would be an undoubted subversion of our estate, which cannot stand and subsist without free trade of merchandise and seafaring, as being the

Freedom of
the seas.

¹³⁵ While the merchants of Amsterdam were enjoying their peaceful triumph, their less fortunate brethren of Brussels were shuddering at the trial and exe-

cution of Annette van der Hove, a poor woman who, being convicted of holding the Reformed faith, was publicly buried alive.—Davies, Vol. II. p. 311.

CHAP. XIII. only means that God hath appointed for our maintenance ; and the more that our seafaring and traffic diminisheth, according to the same proportion the strength and power of these countries would also be weakened and decay : for our inhabitants cannot be maintained, much less can we have any general means, by the inlandish benefits of commodities, rents, or revenues, as other great countries may, because our country is too little : therefore we must have all that out of the sea and seafaring.”¹³⁶

Envoys
from India
in Holland.

From various ports of Zealand and Holland eighty vessels sailed the following year to America, Africa, and India. Vainly the Portuguese colonists laboured to convince the native princes of the East that the Dutch were a mere horde of pirates with whom no dealings were safe.¹³⁷ Their businesslike and punctilious demeanour, and probably, likewise, the judiciously selected cargoes with which they freighted their ships outwards, whereby they were enabled to offer better terms for the silk, indigo, and spice, they wished to buy, rapidly disarmed the suspicion of several of the chiefs. When the Rajah of Achem refused to deal with them, they undertook to bring his envoys to Holland and back,

¹³⁶ More Excellent Observations on the Estate and Affairs of Holland : in a discourse, shewing how necessary and convenient it is for their neighbouring countries, as well as the Netherland Provinces, to trade to the Indies, &c. &c. : faithfully translated out

of the Dutch copy : London, 1622. p. 3.

¹³⁷ It was to counteract similar misrepresentations regarding the English, that Elizabeth, in 1599, sent Sir J. Mildenhall on a special embassy overland to the Moghul. —Mill, Hist. Brit. India, Book I. ch. 1.

in order that he might be satisfied that they were at home what they represented themselves to be. The proposal was accepted, and the report of the envoys was such that they soon got leave to establish a factory at Achem.¹³⁸

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In 1602 the celebrated East India Company was formed under charter granted by the States-General,—the original capital being six millions of guilders, subscribed by the merchants of Delft, Rotterdam, Hoorn, Enkhuysen, Middleberg, but above all Amsterdam.¹³⁹ They established factories at many places, both on the continent of India and in the islands; but their chief depôt was fixed at Bantam. Being constructed of wood their warehouses were on two occasions wholly destroyed by fire; yet they remained: the situation being convenient, and natural casualties having small influence on their minds. But another cause determined them subsequently to quit the settlement altogether. The lord of Bantam, like other foolish lords, no sooner perceived the attachment of the laborious colonists to the locality where they had first settled, than he began to imagine that he might take advantage of them with impunity; and he accordingly thought fit to impose certain new and very burdensome duties on the objects of their trade.¹⁴⁰ The Dutch complained, remonstrated, argued, threatened, and finally refused to pay these

East India
Company.

¹³⁸ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 53.

¹⁴⁰ More Excel. Observ. on the Affairs of Holland, p. 9.

¹³⁹ Ibid. Tom. I. p. 57.

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XIII.

oppressive tolls. Royalty proved obstinate, and refused to relax its hold: what could they do but submit? How could they move their establishments elsewhere? Whither should they transplant them? The shrewd Java chief was not to be cajoled by these adventurers. But after the manner of extortioners, in high places as well as low, his highness of Bantam found when too late that he had egregiously overreached himself. The Dutch made up their minds to shift their quarters, and seek a new settlement elsewhere,—anywhere rather than endure what they felt to be a wanton wrong. They had baled out one ocean, and swam two more; they had bearded Philip the Invincible and put out his Inquisition fires; should they yield to this petty Rajah, while they had ships and hands, money and money's worth, to pay for the produce they offered to buy? And having the resolution to do the right thing in such circumstances, it turned out easier of accomplishment than they had themselves, perhaps, foreseen. For the sovereign of Java gladly offered them a settlement not above a hundred miles distant, with full permission to erect such buildings as they chose, and an engagement that pepper (the chief spice thence exported) should be sent out of his dominions toll-free.¹⁴¹ These terms were accepted. Jocatra, a situation very propitious for traffic, was chosen as the site of their future factory. Warehouses of stone

¹⁴¹ More Excel. Observ. on Affairs of Holland, p. 10.

and mortar quickly rose; and dwellings, to the number of a thousand, were in a short time added. CHAP.
XIII. All nations had leave to settle and trade within its walls; and this was the origin of Batavia.¹⁴²

In six years the Company sent out forty-six vessels, of which forty-three returned in due course laden with rich cargoes; and the clear profit upon these ships, deducting all charges of the outfit and voyage, was estimated at two hundred and thirty tons of gold.¹⁴³ By the books of the Company it appeared that, during the next eleven years, they maintained thirty ships in the Eastern trade, manned by five thousand seamen; and that they calculated the net return from these at not less than three hundred tons of gold, beside the profits derivable from the land and other property which they acquired as colonists in India. Two hundred per cent was divided by the proprietors of Company's stock on their paid-up capital in sixteen years. These splendid results do not rest upon vague conjecture, but are distinctly set forth "by one of the partners, who had himself received his part of the gain that had accrued from the undertaking."¹⁴⁴ The gains of subsequent years amounted to still vaster sums; and the belief began to arise in Holland, on which Venice had so long delusively rested, that once the ascendancy

Profits of
the India
trade.

1595-1601.

1605-1621.

¹⁴² See interesting work on Java, by Count Hogendorp; published at Brussels, 1830.

¹⁴³ More Excel. Observ. on the Affairs of Holland, p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 4.

CHAP.
XIII.Spanish
trade un-
dermined.

of trade had been established, it was her destiny to hold "the gorgeous East in fee."

But of all the proud results of their Indian commerce, that which naturally afforded to the Dutch¹⁴⁵ the keenest sense of exultation, was the opportunity it afforded them of thoroughly undermining the once exclusive trade of Spain, not with foreign nations merely, but with her own colonies, and even at home. The infatuated policy of her government had prepared the way for her decline. Despotism paralysed the energies of a country whose monuments preserved the names, but unfortunately none of the wisdom, of Punic, Greek, and Arabian industry. The prestige of discovery in the New World was still attached to Spain; and as, at the period of the Dutch revolt, Portugal had been annexed, the commerce of India which that country had monopolised by the earlier voyages round the Cape of Good Hope appeared to centre in her bosom. But the canker of oppression was destined to eat through every fold of her prosperity. Tyranny applied to conscience drove into banishment large numbers of her industrious inhabitants; and ruinous laws of exclusion and restriction crushed all spring of domestic enterprise. While other countries were rising into the rank of competitors, and the currents of trade were setting in new directions, Spain inactively looked on. Even the American commerce, notwithstanding

¹⁴⁵ More Excel. Observ. on the Affairs of Holland.

the most anxious precautions of a shortsighted government, remained only apparently in her possession.

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XIII.

The industry of the Spaniards was no longer able to satisfy the wants of America, and under their name foreigners supplied its markets.¹⁴⁶

Prohibi-
tions to ex-
port gold
and silver.

The overvalued treasures of Peru and Mexico passed, in spite of the most jealous inhibitions, through Spanish hands into those of England, France, but above all of Holland. And when specie was abundant at Amsterdam, its scarcity was productive of such positive inconvenience in Spain, that the government were compelled to have recourse to an extensive issue of copper coinage. Yet the system appears to have been obstinately persevered in despite its manifest failure. The attempt to prevent specie from going out of the realm by mere prohibition was repeatedly "tried in Spain, until it left them more *black* money, as they called it, than white or yellow,—notwithstanding all their mines in Peru and Mexico, and that their laws made it death to export gold or silver."¹⁴⁷ The same conceit experienced like results at a later period in Portugal; foreigners still contriving to "bring their money from them just as heretofore, and to sell other commodities to them for as much silver as ever."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Rotteck, General History, Vol. III. p. 42.

¹⁴⁷ Child, Discovery of Trade, pref. p. iii.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

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XIII.

Loss of re-
venue to
Spain.
1596-1610.

A.D. 1620.

The jealousy of the Spaniards compelled all merchantmen trading to the East to carry guns and ammunition; and the flags of various nations being in turn assumed, none were at last respected. It seemed as if the lawless cupidity of all Europe were let loose to revel in the Eastern seas. For fair trade it was become a service of risk and danger, while the buccaneer thrived amid the universal insecurity.¹⁴⁹ On the whole the Dutch protected themselves best. The Spaniards suffered heavily. From an authority already quoted, we learn that in the space of a few years the Dutch had taken and rifled eleven Spanish galleons, "carkets, and other huge ships, and made about forty of them unserviceable."¹⁵⁰ So crippled was their colonial trade that, even for their own use, the Spaniards were obliged to buy nutmegs, cloves, and mace, from their hated rivals.¹⁵¹ The diminution of revenue, caused by the destruction of the Eastern trade, fell little short of five hundred tons of gold. Nor will this estimate appear extravagant when the excessive rate of customs imposed by the Spanish government is borne in mind. These duties were levied *ad valorem* on the primary importation, — again upon re-export to foreign countries, or colonial settlements, — and, finally, upon transhipment from one

¹⁴⁹ "The first expeditions of the English in the Indian ocean were more piratical than commercial."
—Mill, Book I. ch. 1.

¹⁵⁰ More Excel. Observ. on the Affairs of Holland, p. 7.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 8.

province to another, each of these exactions amount-
ing to fifty per cent on the first cost of the
article.¹⁵² CHAP.
XIII.

In their selection of places to trade to abroad, and in their mode of treating the aborigines of the countries where they colonised, the Dutch seem to have earlier perceived than other nations the true policy which it behoved them to pursue. They sought to extend their commerce, not their territories, or if they bargained or fought for colonial settlements, it was for traffic, not for empire's sake.¹⁵³ The error into which others had, in the insolence of first discovery, fallen, stood warningly before them; but it is one thing to have the opportunity of such examples, and another thing to be made wiser by them. Have we not ourselves beheld, even in our own vain-glorious era, nations to whom the example of the sanguinary colonisation of the sixteenth century has taught nothing, or nothing worthy of the name? The Dutch comprehended what few of their contemporaries could be induced to believe that the value of trade with the Indies did not consist in the amount of precious metals, which formed the most prized, though very far from the most important item of the imports brought from thence. Infinitely more valuable were the spices, cochineal, sugar, coffee, indigo, silks, divers kinds of wood, hides, and other things,¹⁵⁴ the perennial pro-

¹⁵² More Excellent Observations on the Affairs of Holland, p. 8.

¹⁵³ Davies, Vol. II. p. 563.

¹⁵⁴ Observations, p. 14.

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XIII.

ducts of the country, in raising which, or rendering them available, an industrious population of some sort must of necessity be employed, whose wants, as consumers of European luxuries and comforts, it was one half the profit of the whole traffic to the Hollanders to supply.

Portuguese
in India.

But imperceptibly they were beguiled into departing from the wise and unaggressive policy with which they set out. The power of the Portuguese had been too long established in the East to be easily overthrown. In 1618 they still possessed, by compact or conquest, Aden, Goa, Ormus, the Moluccas, and portions of the coasts of Malay and Ceylon; they had factories in Siam and Bengal, and at Macao in China. With them amity or participation was said to be impossible, and the Dutch believed that, from their hostility against them, wherever they failed to drive out the Portuguese they must be driven out themselves. Their treaties, therefore, with such native princes as they could propitiate, were not only for leave to build factories in certain localities, and for permission to trade, but they contained stipulations against all European foes and rivals.¹⁵⁵

The English
in India.

Among these, though less ostensibly, the English, who had started about the same time in the course of Indian trade, were unfortunately for both nations included. The ambition of ascendancy, and the desire of exclusiveness, was the almost universal

¹⁵⁵ Davies, Vol. II. p. 393.

feeling of the time. The true “principles of public wealth were very imperfectly understood, the different nations all traded to India by way of monopoly, and their several companies treated every proposal for a participation in their traffic as a proposal for their ruin.”¹⁵⁶ Without overlooking the prevalence of more enlightened views among the Dutch, of which many proofs might be specially adduced with reference to their Oriental commerce, it must be owned that they appear to have beheld with great impatience the attempts of the English, who had formed a connexion with Sumatra, and established themselves at Bantam, to share with them in the spice-trade.¹⁵⁷ Each party complained of the means resorted to by the other to embarrass their dealings with the natives;¹⁵⁸ in particular markets the Dutch were accused of outbidding their competitors beforehand for particular kinds of valuable produce, in order to engross the whole to themselves;¹⁵⁹ and it was, not without truth, said of them, that, wherever they succeeded in getting a firm footing, they were “severe and exact in keeping the trade of their own plantations to themselves.”¹⁶⁰ The sentiments of their antagonists may be gathered from a dispatch of Sir Thomas Roe, the English governor, in which he tells the Directors at home, that “he had been very industrious to injure the Dutch; some who

¹⁵⁶ Mill, Book I. ch. 2.¹⁵⁷ Ibid.¹⁵⁸ Davies, Vol. II. p. 531.¹⁵⁹ Mill, Book I. ch. 2.¹⁶⁰ Child, p. 7.

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XIII.

were lately arrived at Surat from the Red Sea, he had done his best to disgrace, though he could not turn them out without danger; but the comfort was that there were goods enough for both.”¹⁶¹ Such being the state of feeling, mutual offences and injuries were inevitable. The Portuguese resented the encroachments of both; and the native chiefs were willing to take advantage of either.

Treaty of
1619.

To put a stop to further dissensions, a treaty was concluded in 1619, whereby mutual amnesty and restitution was agreed to; the expense of maintaining the forts and garrisons of Java, Pulicat, the Moluccas, and Banda, were to be shared between the English and Dutch, and a fair participation in the trade of those places was reciprocally guaranteed. Each was to furnish ten ships of war for defence against the common enemy; and joint efforts were to be used to obtain from the native princes a reduction of the duties which both were compelled to pay. A council, consisting of four members of the Dutch East India Company and four of the English, was to arbitrate all differences; and the treaty was to subsist for twenty years.¹⁶² Though vague in many of its terms, the wisdom which dictated it was so obvious, that both parties, for a time at least, seem to have been anxious to observe them; and the Dutch, among other proofs of their sincerity, in 1622, paid, as compensation-money for past injuries done to their English rivals, a sum of 80,000*l*.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Mill, Book I. ch. 2.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

There were still some points on which they were not of accord, but these might, doubtless, have been adjusted in due time but for an unfortunate occurrence in the following year, which too aptly served the purposes of such as wished to embroil the two nations at the time and for many following years. This was the trial and condemnation of Towerson, the chief of the English factory in the island, and twelve of his countrymen, by the Dutch authorities of Amboyna, upon a charge of conspiring with the natives to seize the place and extirpate the Dutch settlers. Ten English and as many Javanese were executed; three of the former, receiving a pardon, carried home the news, and from their account chiefly were the statements drawn that obtained popular currency in England.¹⁶⁴

Any report of such a transaction would have been too well calculated to kindle sentiments of national resentment, and means were but too effectually taken by the English Court of Directors to fan the flame. "They had a hideous picture prepared, in which their countrymen were represented as expiring upon the rack. The press teemed with publications; and to such a degree of rage were the populace excited, that the Dutch merchants in London applied to the Privy Council for protection."¹⁶⁵ The government itself shared the general feeling, and without waiting for either corroboration or explanation of the *ex-parte* statement

Picture of
the rack.

¹⁶⁴ Davies, Vol. II. p. 554.

¹⁶⁵ Mill, Book I. ch. 2.

CHAP. XIII. that had been received, orders were issued to seize the Dutch East India fleet on its return home.

The affair of
Amboyna.

From the endless and embittered controversy as to the guilt or innocence of the sufferers, and the fairness or legality of their trial, the calmest and ablest scrutiny of modern times has vainly sought to come at any thing like a distinct or precise conclusion. "The facts of the case," says Mill, "have never been exactly ascertained. The nation, whose passions were kindled, was more disposed to paint to itself a scene of atrocity, and to believe whatever would inflame its resentment, than to enter upon a rigid investigation of the case. If it be improbable, however, on the one hand, that the English, whose numbers were small at Amboyna, were really guilty of the design imputed to them, it is, on the other hand, equally improbable that the Dutch, without believing them to be guilty, would have proceeded against them by a judicial trial. Had extermination been their object (as was alleged and believed in England), a more safe and quiet expedient presented itself—they had it in their power at any time to make the English disappear and lay the blame on the natives. The probability is, that from certain circumstances which roused their suspicions, the Dutch really believed in the conspiracy, and were hurried on by their resentments and interests to bring the helpless objects of their fury to a trial, that the judges were in too heated a state of mind to see the innocence, or believe any thing but the guilt of

the accused, and that in this manner the sufferers perished."¹⁶⁶

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In the opinion of a more recent and not less faithworthy English historian, it seems unquestionable that the Javanese soldiers of the garrison at Amboyna "did, in fact, entertain a design of the nature imputed to them, either in concurrence with or relying on the co-operation of the English; but if the latter cannot be exonerated from the accusation of treachery, the conduct of the Dutch was no less disgraced by an excess of vindictiveness and cruelty."¹⁶⁷ This is, on the whole, probably as just a sentence as we can now venture to pass on the parties concerned, both of whom were sufficiently to blame, and both of whom, by cherishing those sentiments of commercial jealousy, but for whose prevalence such a transaction could never have taken place, were laying up for themselves a plenteous store of misery and evil.

A sense of their common interests in Europe averted war for several years after this miserable cause of enmity; but it was not forgotten, and jealousy of the Dutch was still further excited in England by their subsequent victories and acquisitions. A visible change in the external policy of the States began to be observable. No longer remembering the attitude or feeling that had characterised their fathers, they found themselves not only recognised, but their friendship courted by the puissant sove-

Change in
the foreign
policy of
the States.

¹⁶⁶ Mill, Book I. ch. 2.

¹⁶⁷ Davies, Vol. II. p. 554.

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reigns of the world. They took counsel with them for peace and war; they were of them and in the midst of them: it had been strange if they had been always proof against the contagion of their example. Intrigue, aggression, and contemptuous disregard of the rights of the weak and powerless, were matters of course among their haughty allies; and their own marvellous success by sea, and the dazzling fruits of their half-military, half-commercial settlements in the East, concurred in suggesting new and daring projects of highly plausible, if not strictly peaceful adventure.

1607-1614.

Looking at the enormous returns of the Oriental trade, which as early as 1608 were estimated at 43,000,000 of guilders,¹⁶⁸ it is not incredible that it should have yielded to the customs, in the space of seven years, no less than thirty-five tons of gold; and the proceeds of the seven following years were still greater.¹⁶⁹ Unfortunately there is little reason to suppose that this colonial income could be carried to the general credit of the state as in augmentation of its revenues. From time to time large sums were voted by the States-General to aid the Company in defraying the expenses of their wars in the Indian Seas. Thus, while individuals made rapid fortunes, the burdens of the community at large were gradually increased. For a time the enhanced pressure, if not unfelt, was borne without murmurs. In the great lottery of speculation, every man might

¹⁶⁸ Davies, Vol. II. p. 426.

¹⁶⁹ More Excel. Observ. on the Affairs of Holland, p. 6.

one day be a winner ; and the prizes daily realised were too glittering and numerous not to dazzle the popular vision. National vanity, too, was yoked to the car of adventure, and helped to whirl it onward with improvident speed. The very skill wherewith it was driven, and the inexhaustible riches of the realms through which its course lay, prolonged the belief of safety and success. Theirs was no pillage like that of the Spaniards in America, but a positive trade in the perennial growths of the most fruitful region of the world. Gold-mines might be exhausted and valleys of diamonds stript bare, but when should the spice-groves fail to bloom or the fields of coffee and indigo cease to wave? Surely to-morrow must be even as yesterday, or yet more abundant!

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Large classes of the community, beside the actual shareholders in the East India Company, were concerned, more or less, in the continuance and extension of the trade. Not only several thousand seamen¹⁷⁰ found employment in the merchant-ships upon the India station, but the outward cargoes, chiefly consisting of manufactured goods,¹⁷¹ and which, in great part, were the products of Dutch skill, necessarily gave occupation to many hands at home. “ So many thousand people, by means of this trade to the East, were set on work and well paid for it, that there soon was not to be seen at Amsterdam one idle vagabond or beggar (for such

Export
cargoes.

¹⁷⁰ Davies, Vol. II. p. 426.

¹⁷¹ More Excel. Observ. on the Affairs of Holland, p. 11.

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West India
Company.

Why not form a company to trade to the Western Indies also? The enmity of the King of Spain was not to be appeased by forbearance : his forts and garrisons there, indeed, were strong, and his people had enjoyed the exclusive traffic for upwards of a hundred years. Yet why should not Dutch ships sail thither, and Dutch goods be offered in direct exchange for the produce of the sunny Cuba and Tobago, as, through the intervention of the Spanish merchants, they had long indirectly been? The course was now, and likely to be met with fierce hostility; there was much risk and difficulty. But the Dutch called to mind how, when they had resolved to sail into the East Indies, they had no forts nor friends in those countries; and notwithstanding "the Portugales then inhabited and had strong towns and forts therein, and far surpassed their power for quantity of ships, yet they then began, in the name of God, to trade there, and with good success continued it until the capital of the Company was fully brought in and paid." The example, too, of Guinea was before them, to which, although pre-occupied by their enemies, they had not feared to trade with twenty ships, and found it profitable so to do.¹⁷³

Objections.

Inasmuch, however, as the entire region to which

¹⁷² More Excel. Observ. on the Affairs of Holland, p. 6.

¹⁷³ Ibid. p. 12.

the new company proposed to trade was under the dominion of the Spaniard, with whom they were again at war, and from whom, even in peace, no participation in the commerce of the New World was to be expected, it was not disguised that the profits of the speculation must, for a time at least, consist of spoil, and that to permanent success “conquest must be a necessary preliminary.” It was manifest, also, that whatever possessions might be so gained must be held by powerful garrisons and a numerous fleet; and these considerations had induced Barneveldt to resist a similar project several years before. But Barneveldt no longer swayed the councils of the Provinces. He had fallen, after a long and illustrious life of public service and private virtue, a victim to the mingled hatred of the clergy, whose intolerance he resisted, and of Prince Maurice, whose ambition he had long curbed, and by whose united influence a reckless majority had been temporarily gained in the States-General. Maurice, too, had passed away, and his no less aspiring brother had succeeded to his offices and influence. Their closest ally was guided by the venturous and unscrupulous spirit of Richelieu, to whom their aggrandisement and the humiliation of Spain were objects equally dear. National vanity in the government of the States and the new-born lust of gambling gains by foreign adventure in the minds of the people—all combined to favour the scheme of a West India Company. As capital of 7,200,000 florins was readily subscribed and a charter of ex-

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and con-
quest.

clusive commerce from Newfoundland to the Straits of Magellan was granted in 1623.¹⁷⁴

With their characteristic caution, however, they at first sent out a few ships laden with the goods of neutral powers, taking chance for a return freight. Finding their account in this, they began to trade for hides to Cuba and Hispaniola with large profits.¹⁷⁵ By degrees they insinuated themselves into the other branches of the West India trade—sugar, cotton, wood, ginger, and cochineal; which articles they paid for in European fabrics of different descriptions. But early in 1624, a fleet of thirty-six vessels went forth on a less peaceful mission. They seized St. Salvador, to which, in the following year, a garrison of 1300 men was sent from Holland. In 1628, they succeeded in capturing the Plate fleet on its homeward voyage, and rifled the Spanish settlements in Cuba. Fifty per cent dividend on the paid-up capital was declared that year. The profits of war seemed to eclipse those of industry after all. Two years later they conquered St. Eustace and Curacao, and undertook the invasion of Brazil, where they succeeded in establishing themselves in Paraiba, Tamarica, and Pernambuco; the Portuguese with difficulty defending the remainder of the country from their assaults.¹⁷⁶ But in the midst of enemies on every side, their new and isolated possessions were from the first defensible

¹⁷⁴ *La Richesse de la Hollande*,
Tom. I. p. 62.

¹⁷⁵ *More Excel. Observ. on the
Affairs of Holland*, p. 13.

¹⁷⁶ *Davies*, Vol. II. p. 675.

only by strong forts built at the great charges of the Company,¹⁷⁷ and garrisoned by numerous troops. CHAP.
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The solicitude which they occasioned to the home government was unheeded so long as splendid profits were annually distributed among the proprietary. But these soon dwindled in amount, while the cost to the state of sustaining and protecting its subjects was rather augmented than otherwise.

During the protracted struggle for independence, Increase of
taxation. the weight of taxation necessarily advanced rapidly. Beside the ordinary imposts upon houses and lands, there was hardly any article of luxury or necessity that successive exigencies did not cause to be taxed. The duty was increased on Rhenish and Spanish wine from 22 to 48 florins; that on malt liquors was doubled, re-doubled, and, at last, raised sevenfold; that on soap (an article of immense consumption in a country proverbial at all times for its scrupulous love of cleanliness) was trebled; the duty on salt was raised from four florins per *hondred* (tons) to more than six and a half; and the tax on cattle, which had formerly been but five per cent on the price of the animal when sold to the butcher, was converted into a tax of from three to six stivers per head per month,¹⁷⁸ and on horses three stivers per head per month.¹⁷⁹

In 1607 a tax of eight per cent was imposed on all species of fruit, and a moderate duty upon sugar,

¹⁷⁷ More Excel. Observ. on the Affairs of Holland, p. 9.

¹⁷⁸ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. II. p. 40.

¹⁷⁹ Carew's Narrative, p. 103.

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spice, and other colonial products. Finally, the duties on corn, whether of home or foreign growth, were gradually augmented in some kinds from three to fifteen florins per last (85,248 bushels), and for a time even still more.¹⁸⁰ Their frequent modifications indicate how severely the pressure fell upon the community. No adjustment, indeed, could lighten such a burden, and its weight was subsequently increased; but the Dutch, with all their regard for economy, knew that "man shall not live by bread alone," and sooner than go back to their house of bondage, they were content long years to eat the costly bread of war, and to drink many a cup of tears.

Public debt.

Nor were even these enormous taxes found sufficient. The system of loans was early resorted to. Many of these were for comparatively small amounts, and were raised at high rates. But the fidelity with which the Provinces, in every instance, met their engagements, and the punctuality with which the public creditor found his interest paid, rapidly established their credit, and supplied them with resources on many occasions when all others seemed to fail. Previous to the revolt, the public debt, chiefly contracted to meet the warfaring demands of Charles V., amounted to 6,832,860 florins.¹⁸¹ Before the cessation of arms in 1609, the unfunded debt of the province of Holland alone was 26,000,000 florins.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ *La Richesse de la Hollande*,
Tom. II. p. 41.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 38.

¹⁸² *Davies*, Vol. II. p. 406.

The war with Spain, which was protracted by mutual resentment long after the independence of the Provinces had been recognised by every other power in Europe, is said to have cost that country 1,500,000,000 florins. The sums which it cost the States were proportionately great, and could have hardly been defrayed, but for the vast gains which accrued from foreign enterprise. These had not only increased contemporaneously with, but, in some respects, in consequence of, the war.¹⁸³ The captures made from the rupture of the Twelve Years' Truce, in 1621, to the Peace of Munster, in 1648, were enormous, and the chief part of the profits of the West India Company were derived from spoil.¹⁸⁴

In the maritime provinces where these profits principally centred, the taxation, which a war expenditure rendered unavoidable, was not grudged. But the inland provinces bore, with continually recurring dissatisfaction, their share of the burden. The benefits which they derived from the prosperity of the commercial towns were not very easily made clear to them; and they complained with some bitterness that their lands were subjected to the weight of innumerable subsidies, to sustain an ambitious course of foreign policy, from whose triumphs and gains they derived no compensatory advantage.¹⁸⁵ To rectify this inequality a singular

Project of a
National
Insurance
Company.

¹⁸³ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 62.

¹⁸⁴ "On estima les prises que ses vaisseaux avoient faites sur

les Portugais et les Espagnols à 90,000,000 (florins) depuis 1623, jusqu'en 1636."—Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. pp. 128, 145.

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project was, in 1629, laid upon the table of the States-General, and by them recommended to the separate consideration of each of the Provincial Assemblies. It was proposed that a National Insurance Company should be formed, partly by subscribed capital, and partly by grants and loans from the exchequer, with power to charge, according to the regulations of a tariff, certain rates of insurance against capture or injury at sea on all vessels, whether foreign or native, entering or leaving the ports of the Union. The company was to be managed by a court of directors, elected in provincial proportions; their accounts were to be periodically submitted to the government, and the company was to be empowered to equip a fleet of sixty armed vessels, to hire troops, and to build forts in foreign settlements, for the protection of the trade they undertook to insure. Any profits they might make were to be their own. The proposition was long and elaborately discussed, and its details are extremely curious; but the remonstrance of the merchants against the heavy additional customs-duty which it would have virtually imposed, and the not unreasonable objections to the creation of so formidable a power within the state, prevailed, and it was eventually abandoned.¹⁸⁶ The merchants, in their memorial to the States-General in 1629, declare that "commerce is of such a

¹⁸⁶ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 128, et suiv.; "Les négociants aimoient mieux courir le

risque des dangers, que de charger leur commerce par cette augmentation de fraix."—Ibid. p. 150.

nature that it requires for every one engaged in it that he should be left full liberty to follow his own fancies (*ses penchants*), views, and inclinations. To-day I may like to insure my goods ; to-morrow I may think better not to do so : if you take from me this liberty you put a shackle, a restraint, a bridle upon my speculations, the unfettered course of which is the sole foundation of commerce.”¹⁸⁷

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Compared with other countries the customs-
duties were kept low ; but direct taxation on fixed property was thereby necessarily increased, and the excise was such as nothing but the buoyancy and energy of expanding and prosperous trade could have given the mass of the community the temper or ability to bear. But, in their resolve to have free and universal trade, the Dutch underrated the evils of over-taxation. Certain of the more oppressive, or rather of the more unpopular imposts, were reduced or abolished on the conclusion of the Twelve Years' Truce. But the interest of the debt remained to be provided for, and the growth of their Indian colonies and commerce gradually led to new and unprecedented impositions. From the Island of Formosa, where they first obtained a footing among the Chinese, and other places, they had driven the Portuguese by dint of arms ; but their factories there, as well as in Java and the Moluccas, required powerful garrisons to maintain them. Not only in times of war with their Euro-

Direct and
indirect tax-
ation.

¹⁸⁷ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. I. p. 150.

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pean neighbours, but during the intervals of national amity, it was necessary, from the lawlessness of the distant seas, to keep a powerful squadron afloat for the convoy of their merchantmen; and at a subsequent and comparatively secure period there were annually employed, in this service alone, forty ships of war and 30,000 men.¹⁸⁸

“Mare
Liberum.”

In 1609 Grotius published his memorable “Mare Liberum,” or assertion of the common freedom of the sea to all nations. Its immediate object was to overthrow the claims of the crown of Spain to the exclusive navigation of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and to establish, as part and parcel of the public law of Europe, the right of every neutral flag to trade in those and all other seas. The obstinate court of Spain refused to yield its claim even in preliminary negotiation, and never in fact gave it until they had been stripped of half its colonial dependencies, and thoroughly beaten in every quarter of the world by the free-trading Dutch. But the principles brought forward by Grotius, though in favour of the rights of universal commerce, gave high offence to the wise King James I. His majesty was grievously offended that the Dutch should claim the right to navigate the Narrow Seas; he called them “the blood-suckers of his kingdom;” and his resentment at their slowness to take his advice in controversial matters helped to sow the seeds of that national jealousy

¹⁸⁸ Temple, Ch. 6.

which, after his time, was destined to bring forth such abundant fruit of mischief.

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Abandoning the policy of non-interference which they had first professed, the States now formed intimate relations with France. By the treaty of 1635 the States agreed to seek the emancipation of the Spanish Netherlands, and afford these provinces the opportunity of asserting their distinct independence: in case they should fail to do so within a certain time, one half was to be annexed to France and the other to Holland. This singular proposition originated with the Dutch, not with Richelieu; and the suggestion of the latter alternative, which would have brought them into direct contact with France, is supposed by some to imply deliberate bad faith. It is alleged that they knew the project of Belgian independence to be but a specious delusion, and that the partition proposed was as impracticable, and hence it is assumed that they put both forward to deceive their ally, and draw France into the war.¹⁹¹ But Richelieu was not a man to be dazzled by bubbles so transparent as these propositions are assumed to have been. The Dutch could hardly have done any thing wiser than encourage their depressed brethren of the Southern Provinces to claim the right of self-rule. They may not have been sanguine as to the event; but their own experience taught them that none can tell from what depths of apathy and despair

Partition
treaty of
1635.

¹⁹¹ Davies, Vol. II. pp. 593, &c.

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a people who have once cherished the name and pride of freedom may suddenly rise to reclaim it. Their proposition at least gave the Belgians a fair chance for self-assertion, and as all the hazards and expense must in the outset be incurred, it was not a very wanton stretch of power to claim that in concert with France they should take the place hitherto filled so unworthily by Spain, to whom they owed no forbearance or consideration.¹⁹²

“ Mare
Clausum.”

Charles I. had been invited to become a party to the treaty; but unwilling to provoke the hostility of Spain, and yet more averse to contribute in any way to the possible aggrandisement of the States, he determined to decline. The national jealousy had been kindled the same year by the publication of Selden's “ Mare Clausum,” which was intended, in answer to the work of Grotius, to assert exclusive rights of navigation in the Channel, and in all the waters around the coast of the three Kingdoms. In a futile and ill-judged attempt to gratify the popular feeling which for other causes was already setting in, with ominous intensity, against him, Charles thought fit to issue, without notice, an order in council prohibiting the Dutch to fish off Yarmouth, as they had been accustomed to do time immemorial without obtaining previously a royal license. The States, on receipt of the intelligence, despatched an embassy to remonstrate on so palpable a breach of faith and amity. Whatever the true

¹⁹² Davies, Vol. II. p. 596.

theory might be of the navigation of the Narrow Seas, their right of fishing was unquestionable. It had been specially granted by King John, renewed by Edward IV., confirmed by the "Concursus Magnus," and guaranteed even by the "Bad Bargain." For its abrogation no pretence, either of injury or interference on the part of the fishing crews, was assigned; and the neglect of their own fisheries by the English was no justification of sudden hostility or withdrawal of a covenanted privilege from a friendly people. But Charles, true to his reputation for obstinacy in wrong, refused to give them any satisfaction. One or two herring-boats were soon afterwards captured; and the Dutch sent a squadron to convoy the rest. Charles equipped a fleet to drive them from his shores, and to defray its cost levied the luckless "ship-money" that cost him life and crown. Many efforts were made, both by the Royalists and Puritans, to obtain the assistance of the States during the civil war. But they deemed their duty lay in the observance of a strict neutrality; nor did they interpose on any occasion, save that on which they urgently remonstrated against the execution of the King.

A strange conceit seems to have possessed the brains of the Commonwealth's men.¹⁹³ They knew that seventy years before the Dutch had offered the sovereignty of their state to the Queen of England; and, forasmuch as they had "abolished king-

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Project of a
union with
England.

¹⁹³ Thurloe, State Papers, Vol. I. p. 191.

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craft" amongst themselves, and the Dutch had never adopted it, they made up their minds for once, apparently with happy unanimity, that it was fit and right to establish a legislative and executive union between the two nations. Were they not of accord as touching prelatical and royal government? Were they not even as Benjamin and Judah, and the rest of the earth as the land of the Gentiles—fuel appointed for the burning? Why not forget all sublunary differences, and join in indissoluble bonds, whereby all hopes of "the man Charles Stuart," and his "kinsman called the Prince of Orange," would alike for ever be annihilated in their respective countries? So full were they of this extraordinary scheme, that Strickland and St. John were sent, in 1651, as envoys to the Hague avowedly to settle the old differences between the two nations, but with secret instructions to open negotiations for an incorporate Union.¹⁹⁴

Strickland
and St.
John at the
Hague.

Great was their surprise and disappointment to find that, though courteously received by the public authorities in Holland, their project was met by a prompt and peremptory negative. Terms of close alliance were cheerfully accepted, and a plan of arranging all subjects in dispute regarding captures, injuries, or losses, was likely to be agreed on, but for an ebullition of popular feeling which, unhappily for both countries, took place within a few days after the ambassadors arrived. Whether the

¹⁹⁴ Clarendon, Vol. VI. p. 594, Oxf. Edit.; Godwin, Hist. Com. Vol. III. p. 376.

friends of the young Prince of Orange apprehended the results of their mission, or wished to resent the death of his grandfather and the banishment of his uncle, by inciting the populace to give utterance to their reproaches,—wherever they appeared in public Strickland and St. John were met with the cry of “regicides” and “executioners.” In vain the magistrates interfered, arresting several of the mob, and inflicting on some severe punishment. The excitement was only increased thereby; and, lest any injury should be offered, a guard of honour was placed at the door of the ambassadors. But nothing could soothe their mortification, or turn away their wrath, especially that of St. John. On his return to England soon afterwards, he manifested his feelings of resentment by carrying through parliament the celebrated Act of Navigation, the object of which was to injure Dutch commerce.¹⁹⁵ Plausible pretences in abundance were, of course, set forth for this enactment, many of which continued to find advocates long after the irritations and jealousies that led to its inception were forgotten; but the feelings that actuated its author are not doubtful, and the injustice and impolicy of the Parliament in seeking thus to avenge its wounded dignity, and to pander to the smouldering jealousy of the Dutch which was cherished by a certain portion of the community, ought not to be forgotten.

¹⁹⁵ Journals, 5th August, 6th Oct., 1651, Le Clerc, p. 314.

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Navigation
Act of 1651.

Whatever the public or private motives that dictated its provisions, it is not unimportant to note how short its beneficial consequences to England fell of the anticipations formed regarding it. Commerce, indeed, steadily advanced under Cromwell and the restored Stuarts. The industrial spirit of the middle class, so long repressed by overbearing power, had burst its bonds, and asserted its manifold claims to be heard, advised with, and considered in all state affairs; and, though a Bill of Rights was still to be enacted before it could lay down its fears and go to peaceful work in confidence and safety, —the power of parliament was no longer questioned, and the prerogative of taxation, “not by consent, but by imposing,” was buried in the tomb of the first Charles, never to trouble England more. Many causes, likewise, conspired to stimulate the peaceful progress of the nation in arts and industry. It was an epoch of political disgrace and religious crime; but it cannot be denied that the country advanced in physical comfort during the thirty-seven years alluded to, and the subsequent extension of foreign commerce was for a long time currently ascribed to the wisdom of the Navigation Act.¹⁹⁶ Now there is a very remarkable piece of evidence, which it will hardly be deemed irrelevant to cite, and which is the better worthy of attention because it was given on a wholly different topic, and one which had no direct reference to the point in

¹⁹⁶ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, on the Navigation Laws, by Mr. Vol. II. p. 292. — See Note XI., M'Culloch, Vol. IV.

question. A minute comparison, not between the domestic wealth or industry, but between the foreign commerce of the Dutch and English in the year 1691, is given us by Sir J. Child. His object is to shew that the former were gradually beating the latter in every quarter; and, in support of his view, he states that in the Russian trade, of which we had formerly more than the Dutch, they had, in 1690, twenty-two sail of great ships and the English but one; that in the Greenland trade they and the Hamburghers had usually between them from four to five hundred ships,—the English in some years one, and in others none at all; that in the East India trade the Dutch had increased manifold, while the English were on the decline; that in the trade for raw wool, to Bilbao in Spain, the Dutch (probably by underbidding them in freights) had wholly supplanted the English buyers; that the greater part of the Plate trade to Cadiz had fallen into their hands in like manner; that the trade to Norway was nearly altogether gone to the Holsteiners and Danes;¹⁹⁷ the herring-fishery on the eastern coast, and the trade to Ireland¹⁹⁸ and Scotland from abroad, “the Dutch had bereaved the English of, and in effect wholly engrossed to themselves.” The trade with New York, which had, in 1664, been taken from the Dutch, he thought it likely would

¹⁹⁷ This he himself attributes to the operation of the Navigation Act.

¹⁹⁸ It was with a view to counteract this competition with Eng-

lish shipping that the restrictive statutes were passed, which the Irish parliament successfully disputed and annulled in 1779.—Huskisson's Speeches, II. 308.

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with Eng-
land.

still be borne in their shipping;¹⁹⁹ notwithstanding the attempts²⁰⁰ legislatively made to prevent it, and secure a monopoly to British shipping,—attempts which were among the earliest causes of ultimate quarrel with America.²⁰¹

The more immediate consequence of the Navigation Act was to inflame the irritation already existing in the United Provinces, and to hasten the commencement of the first naval war with England. Though parleyings were still prolonged, there was, in reality, but little disposition to concede manifested by the Dutch; and for Cromwell an absorbing source of national interest and excitement was but too opportune. His dripping hand was already on the chair of state; yet the minds of men were not prepared, in quiet, thinking time of peace, to see him seat himself therein. He had slain, and was about to take possession, but it were as well that his entry were signalised by great achievements, and that the fame of avenging the old grudge of the nation against their distinguished rivals should encircle his unanointed brow. In July 1652 war was declared, and during the two ensuing years the best energies of both nations were devoted to the work of mutual destruction. How desperately they fought, and with what alternate fortune, he will best know who, deeming it rather unsafe to take for granted all that has been written in praise of either side, takes the trouble to examine both. Those who

¹⁹⁹ Child, *ut supra*.²⁰⁰ 12 Charles II.ch.18; 15, ch. 7.²⁰¹ Bancroft, *Hist. Colon. of United States*, Vol. II.

believe in Cromwell's pious thanksgivings for the stream of murderous mercies vouchsafed to him, or who are ready to swallow in faith, nothing doubting, the charming fables of Hume, will, of course, conclude that the Dutch were utterly beaten, and compelled to sue for peace. CHAP.
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The truth seems to be that the conflict had become, in both countries, equally unpopular. The Dutch mourned the loss of upwards of 1100 ships of merchandise and war;²⁰² and if the injury done to the shipping of the English was numerically less, that inflicted on their foreign commerce was far more severe. At Surat it had been stopped; "the whole of the coasting trade became so hazardous as to be nearly suspended, and at Bantam traffic seems to have been rendered wholly impracticable."²⁰³ The sums which the Provinces were obliged to raise by loans and taxes during the struggle were said to exceed that which had been expended during the thirty years' war with Spain:²⁰⁴ the corresponding cost in England was defrayed by confiscations of crown and church lands, and fines imposed as political penalties on "delinquents," the name by which the Puritans designated all who had adhered to the King. Vivid is the picture of the time drawn by Mr. Carlyle: "The necessities of this war are great. Any remnants of royal lands, of dean and chapter lands—sell them by rigorous auction: the very lead of the cathedrals one is tempted to sell, nay, almost

²⁰² Statement of Sagrado, the Venetian minister at the Hague.
—MS. quoted by Lingard, note 14.

²⁰³ Mill, Book I. ch. 3.

²⁰⁴ Davies, Vol. II. p. 721.

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the cathedrals themselves, if any one would but buy them. Money, money;—our Blakes and Monks, in deadly wrestle with the Dutch, must have money! Estates of delinquents, one of the readiest resources from of old. Search out delinquents! Sift them, search them, riddle the last due sixpence out of them. The Commons journals of these months have formidable ell-long lists of delinquents. Poor unknown royalist squires, from various quarters of England, my lord general has seen crowding by thirties and forties of a morning about the halls of doom, with haggard expression of countenance, soliciting, if not mercy, yet at least swift judgment.”²⁰⁵

Peace with
England.

Cromwell no longer thought it to be his interest to protract the war, and negotiations were accordingly opened, in which he affected to insist upon all the conditions which the States had pronounced inadmissible two years before. But when their envoys were about to withdraw, “the lofty pretensions which had been set forth, and the great advantages which had been proposed by the large expenditure of blood and treasure, were silently abandoned. Cromwell’s motives were obvious and passing. Monk, after ceasing to be his creature, said, that it was a base treachery in Cromwell to make a sudden peace, and betray all the advantages of the war, that he might go up to the throne with more peace and satisfaction.” The claims for indemnity, the right of the flag in the sense originally set forth, and the project of union, were discussed no more;

²⁰⁵ Carlyle, Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches, Vol. II. pp. 169, 170.

but it was proposed that the fugitive princes and their adherents should be forbidden to reside in Holland; that the flag of the Commonwealth should be honoured in the Narrow Seas as the royal standard had heretofore been; and that a joint commission should be named to arbitrate all claims of injury or loss sustained by either nation in the East. Both governments proclaimed the conclusion a triumphant peace; and the people, who were sick of the struggle received the announcement with rejoicings.²⁰⁶

The Commissioners met in August 1654 to adjust conflicting demands. The English East India Company produced an account of damages since 1611, amounting to 2,695,999*l*. The Dutch met them with a list of injuries and losses equal to 2,919,861*l*. After a long examination, a final balance of 85,000*l*. was struck in favour of the former.²⁰⁷

The ten ensuing years were, to the Dutch, a season of great prosperity. At peace with all their neighbours, the losses of war and the burdens of taxation were borne with cheerfulness, amid the gains of undiminished trade and improving manufacture. But it is the penalty of greatness to be envied and hated. In the midst of peace the Dutch ambassador at Paris warned the States, that Cromwell and Mazarin, who were now in strict alliance, were concerting measures to destroy their colonial commerce. Privateers were frequently equipped in the ports of France to make prey of the

A season of
peace.
1654-1664.

²⁰⁶ Foster, Life of Cromwell,
Vol. II. p. 250.

²⁰⁷ Mill, Book I. ch. 3.

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rich merchantmen returning from the East. For a time they were unwilling to complain; but finding, upon examination, that within a few years, 300 vessels of the Provinces, containing cargoes worth 3,000,000 of guilders, had been captured, they were at length driven to interpose, and with a high hand, for the protection of their trade. The Cardinal's measures against them were not yet matured; and the Protector's death soon afterwards freed them from immediate anxiety.²⁰⁸

"Delenda
est Car-
thago."

But the enmity of Charles II., which sprang from motives of personal spleen at their treatment of him while in exile, was not less bitter than that of Cromwell; and his youthful and ambitious ally, Louis XIV., was even more ready than Mazarin to stimulate the hereditary hatred which every member of the Stuart family seems to have borne to the Dutch. An enlightened public opinion, in either France or England, would have curbed royal hostility. In France, it would instinctively have cherished sympathy with a people constitutionally governed; in England, it would have known how to value the support of a power, firmly allied with whom the dangerous aggrandisement of France might have most effectually and economically been resisted. But opinion in either country was still powerless and undiscerning. The sarcastic liberalism of Paris jeered and exulted at the stupidity of

²⁰⁸ Lettres et Négot. De Witt
et Boreel, 17th Dec. 1655, 24th

April, 1656, Tom. I. p. 369, et
suiv.

the English in damaging the strength of the Dutch ; and it was to the country party that Shaftesbury appealed when, from the woolsack, he ended his memorable harangue against the Dutch with the exclamation, "*Delenda est Carthago!*"²⁰⁹ CHAP.
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It must be confessed, on the other hand, that the colonial policy of the Dutch furnished but too many grounds of jealousy and complaint. Not content with their fair possessions in the East, they had never relinquished the policy of aggression. Driven from Formosa in 1661, they had compensated themselves for its loss by taking possession of Cowlan Cananor and Grand Canor, with about 150 miles of territory on the Malabar coast, and to their principal factories in India they now suffered no other nations to trade. Their trade to Persia and China continued also to extend, and, together with that to Borneo, yielded large returns. Though the weakness of the system on which the West India Company had been originally founded began to be felt, its calls on the State for protection did not cease to be loud and importunate. The harvest, and even the gleanings, of American plunder had long since been gathered, yet they marvelled that their profits annually decreased, and hoped in further acquisitions to find new fields of exaction. Expelled from one hemisphere, they assailed another ; and about the same year that Brazil was finally wrested from them by the Portuguese, they retaliated by forcibly pos-

²⁰⁹ Parl. Hist. Vol. IV. p. 504.

CHAP. XIII. } sessing themselves of the Cape of Good Hope. Warned by experience, they strove to deal better with their new acquisition, and were not wholly unsuccessful.

The fruit of conquests and monopolies.

But in general De Witt bitterly complains that, far more than the Company which enjoyed the exclusive commerce to the East, they had "made war, instead of trade," their leading object. Instead of founding free colonies, which would, as he wisely says, have had in them the elements of self-defence and self-sustainment, the West India Company was filled with schemes of conquest, in which they squandered more than would have established a host of free settlements, and which were doomed eventually to prove sources only of disappointment and disaster. Peaceful and trading colonies would have taken the exports of Holland in ever-increasing quantities, and formed so many outposts and strongholds in time of war. The splendid but unfruitful conquests of the Company cost vast sums to gain and hold as military positions, interchanged comparatively little with Holland, and were rent, one after another, from its grasp in the course of a few years by foreign powers. "Such is the natural fruit and punishment of monopolies and conquests."²¹⁰

Second war with England.

The African possessions of the Dutch were in 1663 disputed by the King of England upon the plea that they formed part of the dowry of Cathe-

²¹⁰ De Witt, Part I. ch. 19.

rine of Portugal. In a better state of international feeling such claims would have doubtless been adjusted; but where sentiments of distrust and rivalry have long been cherished, what coast is too barren or profitless to engage in sanguinary conflict nations that boast of their civilisation, enlightenment, and belief in the forbearing and forgiving mandates of the Gospel? "Coasts of Guinea wrongfully possessed," right of the flag in British seas (never so defined as to prevent quarrel), privilege of the herring-fishery off Yarmouth shore, that never-to-be-forgotten Amboyna business not yet sufficiently atoned for, and the capture of the *Bona Esperanza* and *Bona Adventura*, imperatively demanding at the end of twenty remiss years to be either settled for by way of compensation in monies numbered—say 160,218²¹¹—or else by the items that ordinarily constitute a glorious sum in the arithmetic of war! Early in 1664 both Houses addressed the throne, praying that measures should forthwith be taken for the redress of the wrongs done to his majesty and his subjects by the United Provinces. The reluctance of Clarendon, who strove to avert hostilities, was overborne; and a supply of 3,500,000^{l.}, then deemed enormous, was voted by the Commons. The chief aim of Charles, who

²¹¹ See the "Remonstrance of the interested in the ships *Bona Esperanza*, and *Henry Bona Adventura*, of London; with a narrative of the proceedings in the case depending before the States-

General, between the assignees of W. Courten and the East India Company of the Netherlands, faithfully stated by George Carew:" London. 1662.

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scrupled not to misapply large portions of this sum to his private purposes, was thus accomplished. Popular feeling was no less excited in the Provinces. The vote of the States-General of 14,000,000 guilders to equip an extra fleet, and their decree that, in order to procure seamen enough, the whale and herring-fisheries should be suspended, were received with an outburst of pride and joy.²¹² The progress of the English in the India trade began to be regarded with more jealousy and suspicion than formerly ;²¹³ many recent affronts and old grudges sought for satisfaction ; and thus, without either being impelled by any pressing or imperative necessity, and equally reckless of ulterior consequences, two nations—who had, in fact, a greater interest, politically and commercially, in each other's welfare than either had in that of any other—rushed with enthusiasm into deadly conflict.

Treaty of
1667.

Of its details—its triumphs, its defeats, its boastings—this is no place to speak. Both fought with their accustomed gallantry—too well. More than two years were spent in the work of mutual injury, and then, weary of embargoes, reprisals, deaths, “enormous taxes,” and glorious victories claimed by both sides,—both agreed to peace, which was concluded without accomplishing any one of the objects for which the contest had been waged. The Parliament had discovered enough of the King's financial principles to disincline them to repeat

²¹² Davies, Vol. III. p. 19.

²¹³ Mill, Book I. ch. 2.

their lavish grants of 1664 ; and De Witt began to experience much embarrassment from the growing party of the Prince of Orange,²¹⁴ whose claims to the dignities usually held by his family Charles professed to have much at heart. To both governments peace was become indispensable, and in February 1667 a treaty was signed at the Hague. "The Dutch," says Temple, "would have been contented with a regulation of commerce upon equal terms in all parts of the world, or with no regulation at all,—the last of which," he unworthily suggests, "would give us more pretence if we had a mind upon any occasion hereafter."²¹⁵ But this was not deemed politic ; and a convention was signed at Breda, 21st July, 1667, entitled "Articles of Navigation and Commerce," &c. By the second of these stipulations the Navigation Act was relaxed in favour of German goods coming through Dutch hands and in Dutch vessels into England ; the right of search was limited within reasonable bounds ; and by the 36th article, all privileges and facilities enjoyed by the ships of either nation were declared "to be mutual in every way on both sides."²¹⁶ But these concessions were soon afterwards rendered nugatory by certain acts of parliament.

A marvellous web of diplomatic chicane is spread Diplomacy. over the political history of the two following years. De Witt, notwithstanding his many great and good

²¹⁴ Life of De Witt.

²¹⁵ Letter in Courtenay's Life, Vol. I. p. 93.

²¹⁶ Chalmers, Collection of Treaties, Vol. I. p. 157.

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qualities, was too often befooled by his own ingenuity. With deep insight into the material interests of his country, he forgot on more than one memorable occasion the tone in which the responsible minister of a free state can alone negotiate safely or successfully; and with devoted attachment to his country he forgot the allegiance which he owed to the unwritten law of constitutional government. Subtle by nature, and possessed of rare accomplishments, he sympathised too keenly, though in all likelihood unconsciously, with the fascinating arts which he saw practised by the rulers of other nations. Government by intrigue was at its zenith in his day. What Richelieu had founded and Mazarin roofed in, was gilt and decorated with consummate skill and splendour by the Grand Monarque. Power walked on velvet to its object, and enunciated, with a graceful hint or witticism, that a realm was doomed, or a long-matured war with an old and confiding friend was about to begin. The strong and self-confident feared not this, and yielded to the fascination of the courtesy, the high-breeding, the magnificence, the social recognition of personal ability, that invested the diplomacy of the court of Versailles with so many charms.

The Triple
Alliance.

De Witt, as first minister of a free people, whose representatives had a right to advise and to be advised with on all important affairs, was sometimes led to envy the superior facility and safety which more prompt and noiseless methods afforded those with whom he had to deal. The conjury

of finesse had bewitched him. He, too, would be secret, rapid, and, we are forced to add, insincere. He would outwit D'Estrades, he would dupe Temple: but he could do so but once with either, and his success in both instances proved to be an irreparable error. He had suggested, without authority, to Louis XIV. the project of a second Partition treaty, which he could neither safely re-
cede from nor avow; and when his sense of the danger of inaction led him to sign the Triple Alliance proposed by Temple, he feared to undeceive the French ambassador beforehand, by complying with those legislative forms on whose observance D'Estrades had justly reckoned. Aware of the faithlessness of Charles and the implacability of Louis, he attempted to win again the confidence of the latter by offers inconsistent with that ill-starred treaty, ere the ink was dry; and Louis revealed his insincerity to Charles, when a few months after he bribed him to renew hostilities with Holland.²¹⁷

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In 1663.

In 1668.

1 June,
1670.

From the guilt and folly of the war of 1669, the parliament and people of England are entitled to be considered free. The terms of the Dover treaty, —whereby for a sum of money, and the promise of a French army to protect him from his own subjects whenever called for, the wretched king agreed to assist Louis in the conquest of Holland,²¹⁸—were at the time, and for long afterwards unknown; but the

Invasion of
1672.

²¹⁷ Lettres et Négot. De Witt et van Beningen, et P. de Groot, Tom. IV. *passim*; Temple's Let-

ters, Jan. 1668; Lettres d'Estrades, Vol. II. *passim*.

²¹⁸ Dalrymple, Vol. II. p. 49, App. II. 4to. edit.

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leaders of the Commons knew enough to justify their suspicion that Charles longed to govern without parliaments, and they had no mind to vote him any effective supplies for such a war. The Triple Alliance had besides been deservedly popular; and no decent pretence for its rupture was assigned. But while England took, consequently, but little part, the French armies overran the Spanish Netherlands, and at length, in 1672, entered the United Provinces. Though obliged after some months to withdraw, the injury they had inflicted, and the apprehension of a second invasion, induced the States to submit to the hard terms exacted by England: they consented to yield the long-contested right of the flag, and “to pay 800,000 patacoons (200,000*l.*), for the honour of being deceived and bullied.”²¹⁹ After six years’ war France gained nothing.

William III.

The year 1672 saw the fall of the Pensionary and the elevation of the Prince of Orange to the offices of captain-general, admiral-general, and stadtholder. The ascendancy of the family of Nassau was thereby restored. William “liked the occupation of war, and had no personal object in bringing it to an end.”²²⁰ Without its excitements and alarms he could not have overturned the government of De Witt, who had been the stumbling-block in his aspiring way, as Barneveldt had been in that of his ancestor; and as the fame of Maurice is sullied by his

²¹⁹ Courtenay, Vol. I. p. 421.

²²⁰ Ibid. p. 440.

acquiescence in Barneveldt's death, so the memory of William never can be cleared of the reproach of shielding the murderers of De Witt from justice.²²¹ Allied with the royal family of England by birth and marriage, his unuttered thoughts were earlier fixed upon the acquisition of influence there, than it suited his purpose, or that of his partisans, to own; and while he confidentially corresponded with James II., he was, in concert with Danby and Burnet, preparing his deposition. Both before and after his accession to the English crown, the interest and ambition of William impelled him to the encouragement of a war policy; and the unceasing aggressions of Louis XIV. but too powerfully seconded his appeals to the spirit of his own as well as surrounding nations. By a strange coincidence of the retributions which errors apparently the most opposite sometimes entail,—while the conquests of France provoked the hostility of the Emperor, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes excited the resentment of the lesser German powers,—and while in England and Holland William was regarded as the chief and champion of the Reformation, Pope Innocent XI. furnished In 1688. him with subsidies²²² to maintain the Grand Alliance against Louis XIV.

But however just and wise the general policy The Grand Alliance. which inspired such a combination against the exorbitant pretensions of the French king, it can

²²¹ Basnage, Hist. Prov. Unies, Tom II. 326.

²²² Dalrymple, Vol. II. p. 239.

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hardly be doubted that at the outset personal ambition, and at the close of his wonderful career personal rivalry, actuated William,—rendering him at first reckless in provoking the enmity of a power he had no means of withstanding, and so exposing his country to the loss, misery, and humiliation of invasion,—and equally indisposing him, when a crowned king he stood at the head of a great confederacy, to listen to terms of peace. To say that the invasion of 1672 preceded by a few weeks the death of De Witt, and his own elevation to power, were a poor quibble. His party had long been sufficiently strong to thwart and baffle the peaceful measures of the Pensionary, and to paralyse the influence of the government abroad. As idle were it to recall the peace concluded in 1697, as any indication of William's disposition. It was the Parliament of England and the States of Holland, who, weary of a destructive and unprofitable conflict, insisted upon some cessation of arms, and who were the real authors of that truce, which William assented to reluctantly, and speedily sought an opportunity for breaking.²²³ During his life England and Holland were, indeed, secured from the baleful effects of their own mutual jealousy; but both countries paid a heavy price for the executive union in his person, which gave them such a security: in England the liabilities of the state were increased from 300,000*l.* to 16,000,000*l.* during his

²²³ Wallace, cont. Mackintosh, Hist. of England, Vol. IX. ch. 2, 3.

reign,²²⁴ and in Holland the augmentation, though nominally less, was practically still more injurious.

Nor was the warlike policy of William abandoned at his death. In concert with Austria and England, the memorable struggle in which Marlborough and Eugene acquired their fame was undertaken by the States. The ostensible cause was the succession to the Spanish crown, and the establishment of an efficient barrier in the Netherlands and Germany against the encroachments of France. Year after year the Dutch, to use the admission of Bolingbroke, "put forth their whole strength,"²²⁵ by sea and land, — at one time maintaining 120,000 men, while all the rest of the allies mustered little more than that number.²²⁶ Yet, after all their efforts and sacrifices, they found themselves, in 1713, compelled to agree to the peace of Utrecht, whereby, if England gained little, they gained still less.²²⁷ The commercial treaty which followed was in reality a return to the ancient ways of freedom and reciprocity which had subsisted in De Witt's time.²²⁸

The progress of taxation in a former period has been already averted to. Still more enormous sums were subtracted from the wealth of the nation during the contests with England and France. Beside the annual increase of the funded debt,

Progressive
taxation.

²²⁴ Colquhoun, *Wealth and Resources of Great Britain*, p. 264.

²²⁵ Bolingbroke, *Letters on History*, VIII.

²²⁶ *Parl. Hist.* Vol. VI. p. 1090.

²²⁷ This war added 69,000,000*l.* to England's debt.—*Parl. Hist.* Vol. VI. p. 1346.

²²⁸ Davies, Vol. III. p. 308.

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every branch of taxation was made use of without reserve, to supply the prodigious waste by sea and land. Luxuries were no longer deemed the chief objects of fiscal imposition.²²⁹ Heavy taxes on the raw materials of manufacture, and upon all the prime necessities of life, were successively resorted to. Corn, whether imported or of home-growth, —on the wharf, or at the oven, was compelled to contribute to the all-searching demands of the universal excise. Yet the community bore their unparalleled burdens cheerfully, “because no great gains therefrom were seen to go into private pockets.”²³⁰ Nay, in this very good temper of the community, and their belief in the integrity of the financial administration, lay no small portion of their danger. Are not the most inveterate and fatal maladies often those of slow and unheeded growth? And among the evils that afflict civilised society, have we not daily evidence that those whose maturity defy all effectual cure, are frequently such as might with most ease have been dealt with in their earlier stages? But their beginnings have been either unperceived, or neglected under an impression that at any convenient season they might be curbed or remedied; and then, when the presence of their ill-effects have become habitual and obvious,—because they have never been peremptorily taken in hand, later opportunities are let slip, until the power of renovating the strength, as well

²²⁹ La Richesse de la Hollande,
Tom. II. p. 50.

²³⁰ Temple, Chap. 4.

as removing the exciting cause of suffering — two
widely different things, — has irrevocably passed
away. CHAP.
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The great accumulation of capital had offered facilities hitherto unparalleled for borrowing money on public securities. It can hardly, indeed, be said of the Dutch that they adopted the funded system as an alternative to taxation, inasmuch as the latter was contemporaneously augmented beyond what the energies of commerce or production was eventually found able to bear. But the ease with which, on each new occasion, money could be obtained by loan, and the apparent unconsciousness that prevailed of the ulterior evils of creating a load of practically unredeemable debt, beguiled the States gradually into that system of foreign policy whose pernicious consequences we have already glanced at. The wisdom of non-intervention was forgotten. No important war was undertaken in Europe, in which the Dutch did not as allies or principals take part. Their co-operation was purchased sometimes by territorial concessions, sometimes by promises of commercial advantage; but the gains were often equivocal, while the outlay was certain and great. Holland charged itself with much that the Union of Utrecht never contemplated — “with the keeping of conquered cities and adjacent provinces which, in reality, brought in no profit.”²³¹

²³¹ De Witt, Part I. ch. 3. — See also *l'Art de vérifier les Dates*, Tom. V. p. 329.

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XIII.Subsidies
and merce-
naries.

It became a common thing to subsidise the lesser German powers, and as common for the States to levy troops in other countries whose population were more ready to enlist as soldiers for the sake of food, clothing, and so much per day, than the fully occupied, well-conditioned, and thriving working-classes of the Provinces. This also brought its train of retributive evils. No nation in the history of the world has ever permanently degraded the military profession into a mere trade, or relied upon the rotten staff of mercenary forces, that soon or late has not had bitter cause to deplore its error. If warfare must be, its sole redeeming spirit is that of nationality. Though such a feeling inspires not every man who fills the ranks, it elevates and ennobles all who are capable of sentiment or pride; and if it is of consequence that an army should be officered by men of intrepidity, intelligence, and skill, it is equally essential that the spirit of the host in whom a country confides should be that love of country which discipline cannot impart — that pride in country which pay and booty cannot buy.

The hireling arms in which they trusted, whether German, French, or English, on more than one occasion signally failed them; yet their use was not discarded. Without them, the vanity of holding the balance of European power could not be gratified. The Dutch, though nationally willing to pay others to fight for doubtful objects, were, individually, seldom disposed to fight for any thing less

sacred than the integrity of their own soil.²³² They had a better excuse than in many other instances for offering to lend 5,000,000 of guilders, in 1667, to Spain, who, by a strange fate, was become their closest ally, to be employed in levying troops in Brandenburg, on a mortgage of certain towns of Flanders, which, if the money was not repaid within a given time, were to be permanently annexed to Holland.²³² But vast sums were squandered in subsidies and levies, whence no compensating benefit was ever reaped; and even before the first war with England, the funded debt of the province of Holland alone had risen to 140,000,000 of guilders. How ruinously the cost of that and the succeeding struggles of 1665 and 1672 tended to augment both debt and taxation it is unnecessary to repeat.

As in the successive tariffs of an earlier period we can trace the progress of national expansion, so in the continued augmentation of the imposts of a subsequent time, when that progress had grown less rapid, and, at length, gradually ceased altogether, we may trace the increase of fiscal pressure upon the community. The interest of an insidiously increasing debt, and the perpetually recurring exigencies of European wars, by none of which the Provinces gained any thing, and by all of which their interests were, more or less, sacrificed, sometimes by foes, but oftener by friends, demanded a vast annual revenue. Every article of use or orna-

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Later
tariffs.

²³² Temple, Letters, June 1667.

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ment, of necessity or luxury, from the turf and garden-seeds of the peasant to the pleasure-boat and the equipage of the noble, was laid under contribution. And when these sources failed, recourse was had to direct taxes upon property, and, by degrees, to an increase of the customs. During the stadtholderate of William III. it is said that the Dutch paid, in direct and indirect taxes, the third of their incomes ;²³³ and some years later it was computed that the poorest artisan paid 100 florins to the state.²³⁴

Taxes upon
shipping.

Perhaps the most pernicious of all was the tax which, under various denominations, was imposed on shipping.²³⁵ The naval force of the United Provinces had long been supported by port-dues and charges levied under the sanction of the Admiralty, and, so long as foreign trade continued to increase, the weight of this impost was unfelt ; but, in seasons of depression or interruption of traffic by war, its mischievous tendency became palpable. To this was added the ill effect of taxes on the materials of ship-building—timber, iron, hemp, and tar ; and to the combined operation of these imposts, far more than to the hostile legislation of other countries, may be traced the decline of the shipping interest.

The cost of living had steadily increased, and the cost of production was, consequently, so en-

²³³ Davenant, p. 23.

²³⁵ Davies, Vol. III.

²³⁴ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. II. p. 165, et suiv.

hanced as to cripple some manufactures, and seriously to menace the existence of others.²³⁶ De Witt had seen the evil day coming, and imagined that, by a change in the form of taxation, its pernicious pressure might be alleviated. The danger to commerce, from augmented custom-duties, seemed to be imminent. "If these be long maintained, let us not imagine that our people, thus burdened, will be able to compete with foreigners who are charged less. It is, therefore, indispensable that our people should be eased of such imposts as rapidly as possible." His idea seems to have been, that fixed property should be taxed instead of imports or exports; and the reason he assigns, "that it cannot go away, whereas manufactures and traffic may migrate and not return,"²³⁷ significantly points to a change which appears to have been, with reason, already apprehended.

Imperceptibly, but steadily, capital stole out of a land which no longer afforded it as profitable investment as it found elsewhere. To assign a date to the beginning of this remarkable alienation would be difficult. It is probable, however, that the transfer of realised profits from Holland to other countries had made considerable progress at the beginning of the eighteenth century.²³⁸ The rate of interest in France and England was double or treble in De Witt's time what was paid for money vested in the public securities of Holland. In the midst of war the

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A.D. 1670.

Emigration
of capital.

²³⁶ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. II. p. 209.

²³⁷ De Witt, Part I. ch. 3.

²³⁸ Child, p. 14.

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States were able to raise, within a fortnight, a new loan of five millions at four per cent.²³⁹ The comparatively low reputation of royal exchequers served, no doubt, to check the operation for a time. But if the faith of the Stuarts was brittle, and the revenues of Spain and Austria worth little in mortgage, the credit of England stood sufficiently high, and that of France was not seriously damaged in general estimation until the days of the Regency and Louis XV. In the former, likewise, a spirit of commercial enterprise, theretofore unknown, had burst forth, which readily absorbed the means, whether native or foreign, that lay within its reach. While money was ordinarily to be had at Amsterdam, on mercantile security, at three and a half per cent,²⁴⁰ the merchants of London were often obliged to pay six, seven, or even more.²⁴¹ All the commercial essays and statements of the time concur in attesting the high price paid by traders for money in England, and seldom fail to contrast it with the low interest in Holland. Many of them, indeed, are occupied with earnest discussions as to the morals of usury, as to whether high interest tended more to injure or benefit trade; and, above all, whether Parliament ought not to reduce the rate of interest, or, in other words, settle the value of money. The rather indispensable consideration, whether the omnipotence of Parliament extended to matters of finance, or whether any conceivable amount of virtue

²³⁹ Davies, Vol. III. p. 243.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Child, p. 35.

or wisdom in that assembly could render money cheap where it did not happen to be plenty, appears to have been nearly altogether overlooked in the controversy. But of the comparative dearness of money there is no question, and the alienation of Dutch capital went on until, it is said, 62,000,000*l.* were held in the English and French funds.²⁴⁷ In 1706 Treasurer Godolphin writes that though land and trade both in England and Holland were excessively burdened, yet the government of *either* could raise loans easily at four or five per cent.²⁴² Thus money was already finding its level.

In answer to the celebrated inquiry addressed by the Stadtholder, William IV., to certain members of the States-General and other persons of experience, in 1751, it was stated, that the decline of many branches of commerce was attributable chiefly to the increased competition of other nations, owing to their gradual acquisition of industrial knowledge, and the cessation of those religious persecutions which, in the previous century, had driven so many of their workmen and capitalists into Holland. Hamburgh was becoming the *entrepôt* for Germany of colonial produce; and England no longer bought drugs or spices at Amsterdam, but had learned to import them direct. In the fisheries, the Zealanders were no longer left a monopoly, or the Friezlanders in ship-building. But as the trade with Spain and the Levant and many species of home manufacture had contemporaneously fallen

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Report on
the state of
trade in
1751.

²⁴² Letter to Marlborough, 24 Sept. 1706, Coxe, Vol. III.

CHAP. XIII. off, which could not be ascribed to similar circumstances, the operation of some more general cause was rendered obvious, and there could be no doubt that "this was no other than the long-accumulating weight of national taxation."²⁴³

From the peace of Utrecht, though participating too frequently in the conflicts of their neighbours, the Dutch seem to have put away ambition. They had still great wealth, great skill, the prestige of trade, and habits of industry,—they had still a vast field of speculation abroad, and a noble garden of art and manufacture at home;—they felt that the essential comforts of existence were as well worth preserving as though the shows and pageants of violence had never dazzled and deceived them; and, abjuring the vain shadow, they applied themselves to keep the substance, and they have kept it.

Colonial
possessions.

From the year 1674, they were left undisturbed in their Eastern settlements; and they wisely resolved to be content with such as they already possessed, instead of wasting their substance in perilous wars, or provoking the jealousy of their European fellow-colonists by new acquisitions. Batavia continued to be their colonial capital, where the Governor-General and Council resided, to whom the district governments of Banda, Ternate, Malacca, Pulicat, Zelone, Cochin, Amboyna, and the Cape of Good Hope, were subordinate, as well as what were termed "the directions"²⁴⁴ of Hoogly, Surat,

²⁴³ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. II. p. 203.

²⁴⁴ Lockyer, Account of the Trade in India, p. 327.

and Gombroon. The trade continued to prosper, and the profits of the Company were such as to enable them, in 1729, to pay to the state a renewal fine of 3,600,000 guilders for their extended charter. The colonial produce annually imported by their vessels infinitely exceeded, both in variety and amount, that which had been ever borne into the havens of any other European land. Among the items enumerated, in 1734, were 6,331,027 lbs of spices, 2,404,428 lbs of sugar, 3,997,759 lbs of coffee, 1,549,463 lbs of drugs, 415,970 chests, and 369,577 lbs of tea, 1,807,210 lbs of saltpetre, 14,483 lbs of indigo, 209,748 pieces of calico, and 92,441 lbs of yarn, 21,205 pieces and 62,015 lbs of raw silk, 525,233 pieces of Chinese porcelain, and 354,000 lbs of Chinese tin.²⁴⁵ The profits of the Company still ranged from ten to twenty per cent on their capital. The produce in 1772 is stated to have been worth twenty millions of florins; of this more than a fifth was consumed in the United Provinces, while the residue was exported to France, Germany, Sweden, and Russia, at a further profit to pay for the produce of those countries which were imported largely.²⁴⁶ In subsequent years the colonial administration appears to have been allowed to fall into a state of corruption, whereby it was rendered wholly incapable of resisting the unlooked-for energy which Clive infused into its old competitor for power in the East. The Dutch possessions in

²⁴⁵ Maggregor, Com. Tariffs, Part VI. Introd. p. 23.

²⁴⁶ La Richesse de la Hollande, Tom. II. p. 151.

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the West Indies, which, though not numerous, were the *entrepôts* of a lucrative trade, were the penalty exacted by Great Britain for the recognition by the States of the North American colonies in 1778, and the conclusion of a reciprocity treaty with them.

Agriculture

More attention was turned to agriculture than there had previously been. Capital was applied to a very considerable extent to the reclamation of land and improvement of tillage. A soil was created where none existed before, and new methods of culture were tried upon the ancient fields. With what success needs hardly to be told. But no suggestion of fostering an agricultural interest by means of legislative interference found favour in the eyes of the States-General. Neither in years of plenty was foreign corn kept out, nor in seasons of scarcity was its export prevented.²⁴⁷

Goldsmith.

In 1754 the eye of a solitary wanderer surveyed the aspect of Holland. He had recently come from a realm by natural endowment far more fruitful and more fair, yet whose misery and want clung around his memory, and inspired in distant lands, and after the long interval of years, his "sweetest songs that told of saddest thought." He had likewise seen elsewhere the throng of busy opulence, and listened to the hum of national prosperity. He had had opportunities of comparison, and he had the clear, thoughtful, appreciating eye

²⁴⁷ Davies, Vol. III. p. 392.

of genius to discern the truth of popular condition. CHAP.
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How looked Holland's plight to him?—"Nothing can equal the beauty of the face of the country; wherever I turn my eyes, fine houses, gardens, and vistas, present themselves. When you enter the towns you are equally charmed. No misery is to be seen; every one is usefully employed; and all wears the appearance of happiness and *warm* affluence."²⁴⁸

The humane spirit of popular amelioration is The prisons. naturally allied with that of administrative economy. Many of the old criminal laws were harsh and indiscriminating; but the people were grown wiser than their laws, and now the ancient rigour was no longer sanctioned by opinion. A system of criminal justice and prison discipline, founded on the principle that it is better to reclaim the fallen than to secure victims for the indulgence of public curiosity or vengeance, was gradually adopted. At a time when the prisons of England and France were not only the promiscuous receptacles of crime and innocence, but the riotous schools where every vice was taught upon the efficient system of mutual instruction, and when death was the ordinary punishment of offences of all descriptions against either property or the person,—the prisons of Holland are described as conducted with so much benevolent order and care, that they presented "rather the appearance of schools for instructing people

²⁴⁸ Oliver Goldsmith, Letters from Leyden and Rotterdam in 1754, to the Rev. T. Contarine.

—Prior's Life, Vol. I. pp. 163, 168.

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in work than gaols. That this leniency had not the effect of encouraging crime may be inferred from the fact that, on the inspection of the prison at Amsterdam in 1747, it was found that there were only forty-nine persons in the *rasphuys* (or male wards), most of whom were foreigners; and the number of executions throughout the United Provinces averaged from four to six annually.”²⁴⁹

The poor.

Of the treatment of the poor any detailed recital here would be superfluous. Suffice it to observe that every peculiar lot of infirmity and bereavement was cared for with appropriate benevolence, its affliction soothed, and its wants supplied,—“not grudgingly, or of necessity,” but with a liberal and almost lavish hand. Mendicancy was, indeed, forbidden; but then work, neither oppressive nor revolting, was provided for those who were willing to work, but who from some temporary cause had failed to find individual employment. Hence the universal observation of travellers in Holland, that there were “few criminals and no beggars.” Considering what it costs other nations to maintain a perennial supply of both, it can hardly be doubted that humanity and mercy is the best policy, measured by the lowest test of goodness.

Overborne
but unvan-
quished.

The close of the last century saw Holland stript of all her colonies and subjected to a foreign yoke. But the free and industrial spirit of the

²⁴⁹ Davies, Vol. III. p. 384.

nation perished not. While resistance was vain, it knew how to endure without faithlessness or foolhardiness; and the first red streak of dawn found it not slumbering. In 1814 the old land-marks of local liberty were once again set up; the House of Orange was replaced in more than its old pre-eminence and power; and at the general peace the best of the Eastern colonies were restored. And if in some respects the commercial legislation of Holland has subsequently wavered from her former maxims, and she has seemed to follow England and France in their short-sighted schemes for protecting native industry, it is still her praise that her people never appear to have relied on such artificial aids with confidence, and that amongst the tariffs of Europe hers has been among the least exclusive.

Holland, as she stands at the present day, is the greatest fact in the Industrial History of Free Nations. Not only have the Dutch done more in days gone by, with less means than any other people in Europe, for maritime discovery, enterprise, and trade, and for the practical application of sound principles of banking, insurance, public credit, and currency; but, despite their unparalleled necessities and financial difficulties,²⁵⁰ they have in the main pursued a more consistent tone of liberality in trade than—with the single exception of the Swiss—any other free people to the present time.

²⁵⁰ The Dutch national debt, in 1815, was above 150,000,000*l*.

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And not only is it true that with less means they accomplished more in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for extension of commerce, improvement of art, and developement of manufacturing power, than any other race in Christendom,—but they actually possess at the present hour the noblest proofs of the invincibility of self-reliant labour, and the most cheering encouragements to others not to weary in well-doing, that the world contains. Empires have increased, and kingdoms prospered greatly during the last thirty years of peace, and the prayer of all good and wise men must be, that in mutual sufferance and good-will they may all continue long to contend only in the peaceful means of human progress ;—but it derogates from the just praise of none of them to say,—that nowhere is long established political and religious freedom more highly prized,—popular education more nearly universal,—regard for law and order more profound,—the rewards of industry more widely shared,—the necessities of life more abundantly secured,—and the blessings of civilisation more equally diffused, than among the self-reliant children of Europe's Nether lands.

Look at the map—think of their history—and say, are not these entitled to the post of honour in the march of free industry?

APPENDIX.

“ Voici le Tableau Généalogique de nos premiers Comtes: on y voit que Thierry I. descendoit de Charles Martel. Ce Thierry I. eut la règle de l'abbaye d'Egmont; fit bâtir une église de bois, à l'endroit où le corps de St. Adelbert reposoit; fonda un couvent de religieuses, et favorisa de ses propres biens ces nouveaux établissemens.

Comtes de l'ancienne Maison de HOLLANDE.

Thierry I. probablement mort en 923

Thierry II. en 989

L'intervalle étant trop long entre la mort de Thierry I. et celle de Thierry II., il se pourroit, comme le prétend M. van Hemert, qui a écrit l'histoire de la vie de nos Comtes, que sous ce nom il faut entendre, non pas une seule, mais deux personnes distinctes. Thierry II. seroit, selon lui, mort en 940 ou 943, et son épouse se seroit remariée à un autre comte portant le même nom de la Maison de Gand, et fils de Wigman le jeune. Voyez

aussi ce que Van Loon, dans son Histoire, rapporte à ce sujet. L'historien Wagenaar nous offre aussi quelques doutes sur le règne de ce Thierri II., mais il s'en tient cependant à un seul de ce nom. La probabilité me paroît contre ce long règne ; mais abandonnons ces faits de notre curiosité, et sur lesquels on ne peut acquérir de certitude.

Arnoul succéda à son père Thierri, sans qu'il trouvât nécessaire de se faire reconnoître par des patentes de l'Empereur, il est donc à présumer que le gouvernement des Comtes étoit déjà héréditaire, et que le plus proche parent succédoit de plein droit, sans recours au consentement de l'Empereur ni des Etats.

On n'a point de certitude sur l'année de la mort d'Arnoul, laquelle doit avoir en lieu vers le commencement du onzième siècle.

La mort de son fils, Thierri, connu dans nos histoires sous le nom de Thierri III., Comte de ce nom, arriva le 27 Mai, 1039.

Il laissa deux fils, Thierri et Florent, qu'il avoit eu d'Othilde, ou Withelde, son épouse, fille d'Otton, Duc des Saxons.

Thierri IV. mort sans enfans, en	1049
Florent I. lui succéda, il mourut en	1061
Thierri V. encore mineur, lui succéda. Sous sa	
minorité il y eut des troubles pendant lesquels Robert le	
Frison et Godefroi gouvernèrent. Il mourut en	1091
Florent II.	1122
Thierri VI.	1157
Il eut quelques démêlés avec Florent le Noir, son frère.	
Florent III. (fils de Thierri VI.) mort en	1190

Croisé et mort à Antioche en Syrie.

Thierri VII. mort en	1203
Ada, sa fille, morte en	1218
Guillaume I. frère de Thierri VII. depuis l'an mille deux cent quatre en régence, et mort en	1222
Florent IV. son fils, mort en	1234
Guillaume II. en	1256
élu Roi des Romains en 1247.	
Florent V. mort en	1296
Jean I. mort sans enfans, en	1299

Comtes de la Maison de HAINAUT.

Jean II. mort en	1304
Guillaume III. son fils	1337
Guillaume IV.	1345
Marguerite, sa sœur, épouse de l'Empereur Louis, morte en	1355

C'est sous son gouvernement que commença la fameuse
faction des Hoecksche et des Cabeljauwsche.

Comtes de la Maison de BAVIERE.

Guillaume V. mort en 1389, son frère Albert (qui avoit
gouverné déjà sous le nom de Ruwaard) lui succéda, et
mourut en 1404

Guillaume VI. son fils 1417

Jacqueline, sa fille, morte en 1436. En 1415, elle
avoit été mariée à Jean Duc de Touraine, second fils de
Charles VI., roi de France. Lorsqu'elle se démit de la
régence, le gouvernement passa de la maison de Bavière
dans celle de Bourgogne.

Philippe I. par sa mère descendant du Duc Albert,

fut le premier Comte de Hollande, et de Zélande de la maison de Bourgogne, il mourut en 1467

Charles I. 1477

Marie 1482

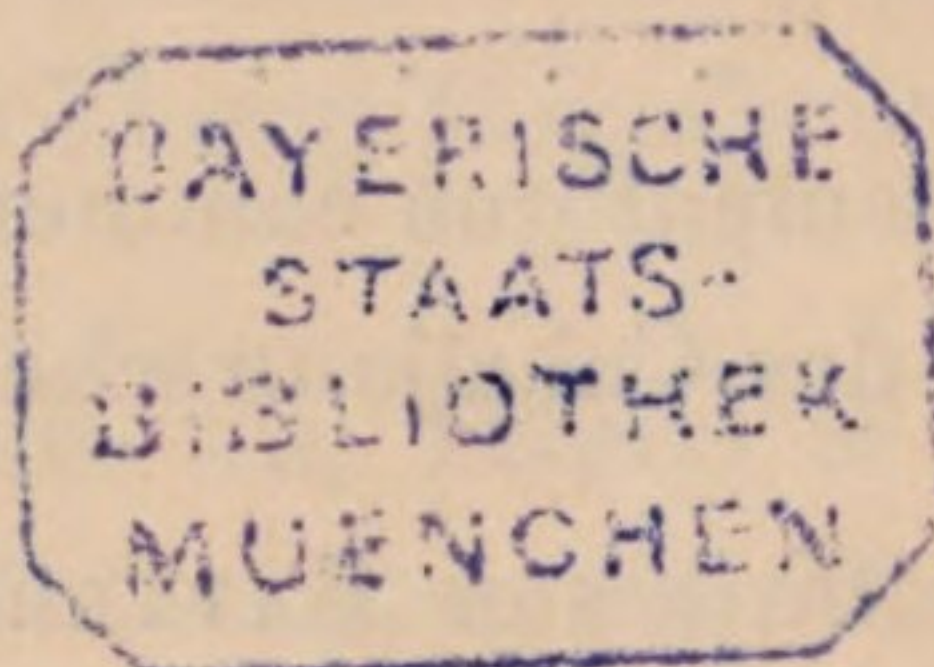
Comtes de la Maison d'Autriche.

Philippe II. mort en 1506

Charles II., connu sous le nom de Charles Quint, résigna en 1555

Philippe III., connu sous le nom de Philippe II., Roi d'Espagne, et dernier Comte de Hollande.

Voyez la Description de M. van Mieris, et les Monnoies des Comtes et Comtesses par Alckemade. La Hollande fut anciennement un fief appartenant à l'Empire."—*Recherches sur le Commerce*, Tom. I. pp. 87, 88.



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